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A

BRIEF ENQUIRY

INTO THE

PROSPECTS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST,

IN CONNEXION WITH

THE SECOND ADVENT

OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

BY

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Introductory Remarks | Page 1 |
|--------------------------------|--------|

CHAPTER II.

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| The Kingdom of Christ | 11 |
|---------------------------------|----|

CHAPTER III.

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| The Kingdom of Christ | 28 |
|---------------------------------|----|

CHAPTER IV.

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| The Kingdom of Christ | 48 |
|---------------------------------|----|

CHAPTER V.

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| The Kingdom of Christ | 67 |
|---------------------------------|----|

CHAPTER VI.

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| The Kingdom of Christ | 84 |
|---------------------------------|----|

CHAPTER VII.

| | |
|---|-----|
| The Reign of the Glorified Saints | 109 |
|---|-----|

CHAPTER VIII.

| | |
|---|-----|
| The Reign of the Glorified Saints | 131 |
|---|-----|

CHAPTER IX.

| | |
|---|-----|
| The Government of Christ and his Saints | 151 |
|---|-----|

| | Page |
|---|------|
| CHAPTER X. | |
| The Reign of the Glorified Saints | 173 |
| CHAPTER XI. | |
| The Elect Church | 193 |
| CHAPTER XII. | |
| The Restoration of the Jewish Nation | 203 |
| CHAPTER XIII. | |
| The New Heavens and the New Earth | 220 |
| CHAPTER XIV. | |
| The Signs of the Times | 238 |
| CHAPTER XV. | |
| The Insensibility of the World to the Warning Voice of Christ | 259 |
| CHAPTER XVI. | |
| The Application of the Subject to the Practical Mo- rality of Life | 268 |
| CHAPTER XVII. | |
| Concluding Remarks | 290 |
| APPENDIX. | |
| Reasons for altering the Punctuation in Luke xxiii. 43. | 299 |
| Extracts from Dr. Goodwin on Ephesians | 313 |
| Letter from the learned Joseph Mede | 325 |
| Extracts from Mede's Commentary on the Revelations | 330 |
| Extracts from Bishop Newton on the Prophecies | 337 |
| Extracts from Chalmers's Sermons | 344 |
| Extracts from the Posthumous Letters of the Rev. J. Fletcher | 358 |

A BRIEF ENQUIRY,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE following pages contain the substance of a series of Discourses upon the general character of unfulfilled Prophecy, delivered in Richmond Church during the late season of Advent; a period in which the Church of England directs the special attention of its members to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The substance of those Discourses is now published in this altered form, as perhaps more attractive to the general reader.

Deeply persuaded that the subject is not limited in its importance to the welfare of a particular congregation, it is my earnest wish to awaken, as far as I may be able, the attention

of my fellow-Christians at large, to its solemn and practical consideration.

It has not been my plan to attempt either a detailed examination of the universal language of Prophecy in its varied emblems, or of the peculiar structure and import of the Apocalypse; my object has rather been to explain the subjects connected with the second advent of Christ, as they lie scattered over the surface of the scriptures, in language plain, literal, and popular. I address the following short work rather to the Christian than to the Critic—to the pious rather than to the learned. Desirous to lay claim to little that is original, I am indebted for my general views to the word of God, as interpreted variously in many respects by various commentators, to whose works I here beg to express my sincere obligation.

I am conscious that many prepossessions; that many earlier and later mental associations and habits of thought—habits matured by the intercourse of friendship, and sanctioned by the experience of age—will meet me upon the introduction of this subject to the notice of the Christian Church. Having seen this result in reference to similar publications, I cannot but expect it in reference to my own. These prepossessions may, perhaps, embody their strength in expressions like the following:—

" We naturally dread enthusiasm and presumption in a too solicitous contemplation of future events, as yet undefined, both in their *nature* and in the *period* of their occurrence. We deem the past and the present to be safer ground to occupy than the future. We fear the effects of curiosity, speculation, and unlimited conjecture. We prefer to the gratification of these dispositions, the patient fulfilment of obvious duties, and the laborious formation of present character. We have marked a spirit of dogmatism, and a restless love of innovation, more or less to prevail in the conduct of all enquiries into the prophetic intimations of scripture; and we anticipate from this habit of mind, disappointment on the one hand, and scepticism on the other. We have marked the tendency of the human mind to quit the healthful road of self-denial and of severe performance, in order to expand its more sickly sympathies in the readier pathways of imagination and hope. We think the subject of unfulfilled Prophecy calculated to afford occasion for the exercise of this indolent and selfish propensity. The alarm we feel appears to us by no means unreasonable, lest the *present* and *specific* allotments of patient labour, of submissive modesty, of diligent application to relative duties or experimental religion, and of beneficial effort for the welfare of

others, should be exchanged for the vague and useless excitements of a too keen enquiry after the future. We fear lest the glowing prospect of an external kingdom, as connected with the Gospel, should chase from the view the milder scene of a spiritual dominion, curbing the lusts and purifying the affections of the heart. We tremble lest the earthly sceptre should supersede the heavenly law, accomplishing its valuable but more silent subjugation of the thoughts to the will and example of Christ. We fear lest ‘the hidden life’ should be forgotten in the splendour of a temporal manifestation; lest Christ, seated on the throne of David, should be dearer to the imagination than Christ ‘formed in the heart the hope of glory ;’ lest the vivid triumphs of an earthly sovereignty should be preferred to the tamer conquests of faith and charity ; lest the love of dominion should at length rob the believer of those ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit which are, in the sight of God, of great price.”

In reply to such and similar suggestions, I beg most unequivocally to say, that I would be the last to form or to encourage a habit of mind which can delight in this manner, to forget the *present* in the *future*—to forget that which God *now* commands, in order to anticipate that which he promises at a *future* moment. I

would be the last, with a rash and careless hand, to disturb the thoughts which experience, observation, the study of the scriptures, and fervent prayer have combined, perhaps during successive years, to settle and arrange.

But, in the mingled condition of human things, is the pursuit of any object, however valuable, likely to be conducted without danger of mistake and evil? Has not knowledge its perils as well as ignorance? civilization its snares as well as barbarism? industry its errors as well as indolence? Yet are any valid objections, either to knowledge, refinement, or activity to be collected from their attendant evils? May not then a holy anxiety be cherished in reference to what God has promised in the future, as well as in reference to what he has commanded at the present? Is it a greater wisdom in this than it would be in any other case, to forego the blessing because of the accidental injury? And, on the other hand, is there no peril to the heart, from the prescriptive tyranny of theological opinion, which has grown venerable, perhaps by time, rather than by its real accordance with the mind of God—which has received the respect paid to a popular belief, rather than the verdict fairly obtained by an ample scrutiny into the language of Revelation? And may not the hand be *kind* instead

of *rash* which would displace, if possible, an erroneous arrangement of ideas, and would point its friendly notice to a suspicion of mistake, where the results of its rectification would be valuable and efficient?

It may likewise be enquired whether, if the external dispensations of God be progressive, the light which can explain them be not progressive also? The tree which the good man resembles, “bears its fruit in *due* season.” The light which revealed the day of Christ to Isaiah, emitted a feebler and less steady ray than the light which enabled the aged saints at the era of his birth “to look for consolation in Israel.” And hence the same eager scrutiny into the time and circumstances of the *second* coming of Christ, in these advanced days of human history, to us may be a matter both of *duty* and of *joy*, which, in earlier times, would neither have been illustrative of the one, nor productive of the other.

The time *must* of necessity *at length come*, in which the themes of unfulfilled prophecy will approach to their accomplishment. Why may not that time have now realized its existence? And why may not the aching heart, wearied with the struggles of others and its own, be now *wisely* not *rashly* cheered by the good tidings of “a glory soon to be revealed?”

Is it *impossible* that the language of the apostle to the Roman Church should now be literally true : “The night is far spent, the day is at hand :” “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed ?” And if it be not *impossible*, can we wish to prolong the night, even though the harbinger should proclaim “the day-spring” from the East ? Has that night been productive of events which should induce us to shrink from its departure ? Rather, can language sufficiently describe the miseries of this period of darkness and of crime ? A few reflected rays, like the moon-gleams upon the broken clouds of a wintry night, have shed their kindly influence upon the earth ; but the sun is still absent, and until his orb shall again ascend upon our horizon, can we entertain any reasonable hopes of better days ? Once, indeed, his light shone brightly upon our world ; but “the darkness comprehended it not,” and he soon withdrew his radiance. Idolatry and superstition have maintained their sway over the *Heathen* nations ; while a darker gloom of ingratitude and crime has enwrapped the *regions* of nominal *Christianity*, than even the paganism which it displaced prevailed to exhibit.

For I think it cannot be questioned, that Christianity has been the innocent occasion of maturing into fuller size the depraved tenden-

cies of the human heart, than they ever reached during any previous dispensation of God. "Corruptio optimorum pessima." The most awful exhibition of ingratitude to God has taken place, amidst the advantages and refinements of the gospel age. The knowledge of duty has not led to its practice. The most fearful demonstrations of enmity to truth, have been made in the two periods of time precisely the most strongly marked by the external advantages of revelation. If the Jewish nation were pre-eminent in the mercies which it enjoyed, was it not equally pre-eminent in the depravity which it displayed? And if Christendom has received yet greater advantages than Judea, in the clearer light of revelation which it has enjoyed, has it not manifested a refinement in spiritual apostacy which even the Jewish nation failed to evince? The pride, secularity, cruelty and blasphemy which the history of papal usurpation has recorded, is a spectacle of giant maturity in guilt, from which the mind recoils with horror. Truly the ages which have unfolded their successive eras since the first advent of our Lord, have been ages of night and woe. But may not the language of the apostle already cited, at length have received its *juster* emphasis?—"The day is at hand." Entertaining, at least, this opinion, I have been

anxious to add my warning voice, however feeble, to those already addressing their accents to the church; and with the humility which ought to be associated with a subject of this magnitude, to invite my fellow Christians to a more distinct recognition of the authority of Christ as the constituted Governor of *this world*, and to recall their expectations to the accomplishment of his promises, in the full redemption of his Church. To the “second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” I would direct their eyes, as to the pole-star of guidance and of hope, while yet compelled to steer their course across “the waves of this troublesome world.” “*Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy :*” (Rev. i.) “*And keep those things which are written, for the time is at hand.*” There may be, indeed, in nominal religion, as in every other professed pursuit, an *unholy* curiosity, an insatiable taste for speculation, rather than a love for practice. But true religion is at once sober and earnest, meditative and practical, while integrity of purpose will ever be the firm basis of all her enquiries after truth. “*If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.*” Seriousness of mind, reverence for God, contrition for sin, the love of Christ, deep self-abasement, a practical submission of the

understanding to the decisions of God, with pure affections breathing after his likeness, these, in their varied degrees, are essential qualifications for the study of the divine word. *These*, I humbly pray God, myself to possess in a larger measure than hitherto ; and *these* I entreat the reader to value as his “ great and hidden treasure ; ” destitute of which, however skilful he may be in argument, or profound in science ; however positive in his theology, or sanguine in his expectations, he will prove at last “ a sounding brass or tinkling cymbal ; ” dead in his spiritual affections, and unfit for the glory, on which, perhaps, with eloquence, he has been accustomed to descant !

CHAPTER II.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

IT has been amongst the arguments derived from analogy in favour of a future state, that, otherwise, the disorders and inequalities of human condition, the calamities of virtue, and the successes of vice, would seem to cast a shade, even deep and abiding, upon the moral government of God. But while this idea has pressed closely upon the thoughtful, it has been their habit to look out for the *adjustment* of these disorders, not in the *scene* in which they have existed, but in a scene which has never exhibited a single trace of the same disaster. It is to me a very singular circumstance, that in these conjectures of the future, *place* has been entirely separated from *character and condition*. The scrutiny into *character*, and the allotment of a corresponding *condition*, have been generally *transferred to another world*; or rather, while the scrutiny has been imagined to take place in the closing hour of *this world's*

existence, *the subsequent recompense*, both to virtue and to vice, has been imagined to belong to a place altogether *dissociated* from the present scene.

The circumstance however is yet more remarkable, that when from the less satisfactory arguments of *analogy*, we pass to the declarations of Revelation, we have still been accustomed to connect the place of ultimate recompense with a world at once ethereal, distant, and unseen, separate in all its usages and enjoyments from that which we now inhabit. We have been accustomed to *transfer* all our eternal interests, from the scenes of our original abode; to tear up by the roots, deep as they may have shot into the soil, all the associations of infancy and youth and manhood and age; to cut away all the ties of earthly education, of local scenery, and of moral discipline, by which we have been linked to this material world, and to expect the rectification of all the apparent inconsistencies of Providence, in a world of whose nature, usages, and locality, we have formed not even an indistinct idea. This habit of thought is, I own, very remarkable; and candour and the love of truth compel me to ask, whether the theory which it embraces be consistent either with Reason or Revelation?

Is it consistent with REASON ? The circumstances which will approach the nearest to our own, are those of a race of men, connected with a wide dominion of which they form but a part, who should have thrown off the allegiance which they owed to their sovereign, and who are now occupied with speculations and pursuits entirely their own, independent of the will, and subversive of the laws of the monarch, to whom by birth and enactment they were subject. Let it be supposed that the monarch is just, forbearing, kind, and powerful. He looks with indignation and sorrow upon that province of his empire, wasted by discord, impoverished by vice, ravaged by cruelty, oppressed by force, and wretched through crime. He contemplates the struggle with a keen and cautious eye—he marks the varieties of character—the shades of rebellion—the conflicts of the many with the few—of the few who resist the turbulence of anarchy and the misrule of lawless force—of the few who look with manly scorn at the standard of rebellion, and who at the hazard of life unfurl the righteous banner of their king, and who urge the mutinous, alike by the experience of their misery, as by the character of their sovereign, to throw down their arms, to supplicate his clemency, and to submit to the wise administration of his

laws. The monarch, at once powerful, kind, and just, resolves to vindicate his insulted authority—to arrest the progress of successful crime—to punish the resolute in evil—to reward the calamities of defeated loyalty ; and to exhibit his paternal kindness, his legislative wisdom and his kingly strength, in the restoration of this diseased province to civil, moral, and national health.

Two modes of action might present themselves to his mind. He might send a special commission into the land—he might accompany this commission with an overwhelming force, before which all the resources of the rebellious must at once be annihilated. He might arrest the daring and the guilty, and by a judicial process arrange the scale of punishment, and assign to each, the just expiation of his crime—he might collect the loyal, and acquaint himself with all their claims upon his regard—he might then transfer them, with all their possessions, as far as might be, to the peaceful regions of his empire—he might chase to some unhospitable climate the guilty thousands who had taken arms against his authority ; and having cleared the land of its inhabitants, he might lay waste its dwellings ; destroy by fire and violence the fertility of its fields ; give up its beauty to neglect and oblivion ; blot out its

name from the titles of his crown, and consign it, in this its perished condition, to be a memorial of the folly of rebellion, to the millions of his subjects reposing peacefully beneath his sway.

Or, he might resolve to exhibit the attributes of kingly power, wisdom, justice, and mercy, in the contrast between misrule, with its crimes and calamities, and loyalty with its security, happiness, and concord. He might send a commission, not to annihilate but to repair—not to crush by violence, but to restore by wisdom—not to erase the title from his brows, but to restore allegiance to his laws. He might evidence the severity of justice, and the clemency of compassion—he might educate, enlighten, protect, and reward—he might bring into exercise the latent sympathies of the misguided and the ignorant—he might bring to bear upon the hitherto degraded and unhappy, the nobler motives to human action, and he might succeed in the high and generous effort, of converting a moral wilderness into a scene of culture, fertility, and concord. Rejecting the theory of the stern

“ Cum solitudinem faciant, pacem appellant,”

he might prefer the nobler trophy; of enmity removed—of rebellion crushed—of anarchy dis-

placed—and of a land obedient to the sceptre which it had once refused.

I ask whether REASON would not confirm the preference which the monarch had made?

But is this vindication of the ways of God, in a world different from that in which those ways hitherto have been visible, is this vindication consistent with REVELATION? Has God indeed declared that this material earth shall be a memorial of wrath, but not of mercy? A vindication of his honour by the subversion of his foes, but not a vindication of his love in the restored happiness of his friends? Is it the recorded verdict of his immutable will, that satanic malice, though it shall not hold in perpetual subjection the bond-slaves whom God has redeemed, shall yet succeed in the demolition of the globe on which they originally fell beneath his sway? That the *scene* and *place* of redemption shall be separated from the persons redeemed? That the earth with all its variety of garniture and beauty, once fitted to be the birth-place of their happiness, and given to them as the patrimony and sovereignty of their race, shall be torn away from their possession, and given up to the avenging flame? Is it indeed the verdict of Revelation, that this earth on which the Redeemer walked and communed with men, in the hour of his humiliation, shall

never be the scene of his fellowship with them in the hour of his power and his glory? Did he “as a wayfaring man tarry with them only for a night,” and ascend but to return in the vengeance of insulted majesty to annihilate the scene on which he endured this dishonour? Is this theory, sanctioned though it may be by centuries of approving theology; and consecrated as it may be by the living hopes and fears of the good and great in many a successive age; is it derived from the fair delineation of the prophetic word, or does it owe its continued popularity to the prescriptive force of habit, and to the despotism of accredited interpretation?

Fastened to my own mind, as this interpretation has been, by all the associations of the past, and by all the habits of education and converse with other Christians, I am at length compelled to separate from it, through the plain text and authority of scripture. I have found at length, to my great surprise, the theory to be unsustained by a single text of scripture, when *fairly explained by the contexts* amidst which it stands.

I am, however, too mindful of the slow process by which the discovery of this fallacy, practised most conscientiously upon the minds of a *present* generation by the sacred instruc-

tions of that which is *past*; I am too mindful of the reluctance with which the discovery has been received by myself, to be impatient or intolerant in reference to the views still entertained by the majority of my fellow-Christians. My aim in the present publication is simply to state my own views; and to ask from the Reader a more deliberate scrutiny into the expectations which he is wont to cherish—a more accurate enquiry into the true meaning of that holy text, to which, with myself, he desires with reverence to submit. In making the statement, I entreat him to forbear the exercise of a hasty and violent condemnation; to remember the possibility of error; to search with honesty and courage the avowals of that volume in which God has deigned to communicate his will; and to receive its decisions, even when contradicted by all the recollections of the past, and opposed by all the prevalent theology of the present.

The harmonious results of the incarnation of Jesus Christ appear to me to be very seriously disturbed by the existing expectations of the Church. By those expectations the connexion of the *Manhood* of Jesus Christ with the Earth now fading into a *spiritual* and *divine* fellowship, the *future glory* of the saints is entirely severed from his *human sympathies* and *terrestrial dominion*.

We look back indeed to his day of depression and sickness of heart, when he wept amidst the spectacles of human guilt and woe—we trace indeed to the deadly draught he drained “from the cup of trembling,” and to the blood he shed upon the cross; to these we gratefully trace our atonement for sin, our hope of pardon and strength, for these ends we believe him to be “very man” as well as God, and we deem him to be susceptible in the world to which he is exalted, of all that compassion which he *feels* as man, as well as *possesses* as God; and we are cheered by the daily ministrations of his life-giving Spirit; and we expect to be with him one day and to see him as he is; and these hopes lie like a burning coal in the chilled regions of our hearts; but while we attribute these blessings to his agony and death, and resurrection—while we connect his *Prophetical* and *Priestly* characters with this his past connexion with our world, have we not learned to transfer away from that world the *manifestation* of his *KINGLY* power? Have we not forgotten that if his actual manhood were evidenced in its depression, so shall it be also in its exaltation? Have we not forgotten that if as a Prophet he taught on *Earth*, with the vocal organs of our nature—if on *Earth*, as a Priest he made

a visible atonement in the agonizing demonstrations of mortality upon the cross, so he will on the same EARTH render visible the power of his *Kingly* office, and stretch forth his redeeming sceptre from shore to shore!

Is it without a distinct and adequate reason that the Lord Jesus Christ is called “the second Adam?” Surely the expression comprises a fuller meaning than that generally assigned to it. It implies indeed a similarity of relation between Adam and his descendants, and the Lord and his redeemed; a similarity of federal connexion between themselves, and the persons dependent upon their actions: “As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.” The transmission of life is by the one, the transmission of death by the other. This is a great truth, momentous in all its consequences; but it is not the whole truth. Christ is the antitype of Adam in another and very important sense. To Adam this material world was given as an inheritance; an empire over which he was to exercise a kingly power. The Mosaic record is expressed in these terms:—“*So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them; and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the*

earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

This original grant to Adam is referred to in after times by David, in the eighth Psalm; and the dominion of which he there speaks is by the apostle Paul ascribed in its full extent to Christ (Heb. ii.) as the second Adam. The creation of Adam after the *IMAGE* of God implies therefore not only the *purity* and *excellence* of his moral nature, but the *sovereignty* to which he was Heir. The Image of God has been too exclusively limited to the idea of moral rectitude; but it comprises dominion as well as rectitude; hence, in the renovated world, the saints are described as "kings" equally with "priests unto God." Both these blessings, rectitude and dominion, Adam forfeited by his transgression; he was in consequence exiled as a criminal from Paradise, and begat his children in his own likeness—depraved and powerless. He could neither transmit the original qualities of his mind, nor his right to sovereignty. The sceptre was broken, when impurity stained his heart. His children inherit pollution on the one hand, and captivity on the other. They are slaves as well as criminals. Satan, the terrific prince of darkness, subtle in

his counsel, as well as efficient in his strength, immediately usurped the crown as it fell from Adam's head, and seized the dominion over the earth, which Adam had forfeited. From that time he has maintained a despotic sway over mankind, and by our Lord himself is admitted to be the King, though a *Usurper*, over the present world: for when our Lord entered into personal conflict with Satan, it was in that character that he regarded him. Satan pointed out to him "the kingdoms of the world," and expressed his willingness to yield to him a delegated sovereignty, if he would allow him the claim of superiority. "All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Our Lord abhorred the blasphemy, but did not deny the usurpation. This usurpation is allowed by the inspired apostle, when he declared to the Corinthians that idolaters "sacrifice to devils, and not to God." Sacrifice is the loftiest homage which one being can pay to another; it is the highest token of submission, the last acknowledgment of supreme power.

But this period of usurpation is limited. In reference to the short duration of this unrighteous dominion, the Saviour declared, "Now is the judgment of this world, now is the prince of this world cast out:" "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all

men unto me." Adam was formed after the IMAGE of God. And who is this Image? We are told by the apostle (Heb. i.) "*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son; whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express IMAGE of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power—when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.*" Adam was but the type of Christ. His creation of the dust of the earth, after the divine image of purity and dominion, had special reference to this pattern. He represented Christ the true and only Image of God. The dominion therefore granted to Adam, expressed the dominion granted to Emmanuel, the Christ, the anointed "*Ruler in Israel,*" "*whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*" "*And this man shall be the peace, though the "mystic" Assyrian be come into our land.*" Micah v. 1—5.

The past and existing ages of mankind have therefore exhibited the misrule and misery of usurped power. The dominion has been in Satanic hands; and the successive schemes of human authority, the evolutions of science, policy, art, and strength, have been the deve-

lopements of his wisdom, in order to maintain, if possible, his full possession of the earth ; but through all these dark periods of time, the plans of a Mightier One prepare in silence for their completion. The world belongs to Christ : the course of human things cannot therefore be at rest ; the decree is gone forth. “ *And thou profane wicked prince, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God; REMOVE the DIadem, and take off the CROWN; exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will OVERTURN, OVERTURN, OVERTURN; and it shall be no more, until HE COME whose RIGHT it is, and I will GIVE it HIM.* ” (Ezek. xxi. 25—27.) Then will the earth be at rest, and the original grant of dominion to Adam be realized : then will God “ create a new heaven and a new earth ;” and his redeemed church, rescued to share his glory in actual sovereignty, and perfect felicity, will “ REIGN with him upon the earth.”

To maintain the contrary supposition is surely to destroy the consistency of the scheme of Revelation, and to render void the most solemn declarations of Jehovah. If, according to the prevalent opinion, this material world be doomed to destruction, and not to renovation ; if Christ shall come only as a mighty judge, to hold a last assize, to separate the righteous from the

wicked, and then to annihilate the globe on which the career of guilt has been achieved, will not the bright promises of creative power to man be blighted and defaced? Will not a boast of dreadful blasphemy console the hosts of hell? And when they mark the EARTH, encircled by the burning flame which now blazons forth its doom of death to higher abodes; and when they shall contrast the fearful scene with that quiet hour of heavenly eulogy, in which "the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy," will they not rejoice in the strength of their misrule, and find a recompense for rebellion in the successful wreck of a fair and beauteous world?

Is then the theory in question more consistent with REVELATION than it is with REASON?

It may confirm the view here given of the future, to enquire into the *nature of that felicity* which our Lord himself has *taught us to expect*. It would be natural to suppose, that in the *selection of blessings*, which he condescended to make the *subject of our prayers to God*, the *consummation of his own work of mercy* would find a marked place. The supposition is consistent with the fact. He has concentrated a prayer for the completion of his own work, in the two remarkable expressions, "Thy king-

dom come," "thy will be done *on EARTH* as in heaven." If we lay aside the prepossessions of education, shall we refuse to admit that our Lord here *bounds our view to this scene of earth?* In heaven, that is, in the other regions of the universe of God, his will is already done: but here we are surrounded with a scene of rebellion, anarchy, and sorrow. Does he then teach us to pray for a *translation from this unquiet land* to another and distant orb? He puts no such request within our lips: he directs us to pray for the establishment of his kingdom, and this kingdom appears to belong exclusively to this *material Earth.* "Thy will be done in Earth, as in Heaven." Is not the inference twofold; first, that the *Earth* is the theatre of *his kingdom;* and secondly, that conformity to his will is the absolute enjoyment of heaven? and that no loftier supplication can be associated with our thoughts, than that the hallowed sceptre should be *replaced* in human hands, even in the hands of the mighty Antitype, "the second Adam, the Lord from heaven."

I ask then the Christian reader, if it be not our duty to call away our minds from human opinions; from the influence even of great names; from popular belief, however ancient; from theories, however venerable; from the prescriptive applause of centuries; from the

vague and indistinct ritual of education; and to take our firm, courageous, and patient stand upon the plain, grammatical, unwarped text of scripture, the clear and lucid decisions of eternal wisdom and truth?

That wondrous volume, the charter of human hope, the anchor of human faith, affords instructions *definite*, and expectations *precise*. Jesus Christ is linked to our world by ties less fragile than those which human theology has framed. Surely He will COME AGAIN, and exhibit those ties in all their beauty and in all their strength.

“ Thus heaven-ward all things tend ; for all were once
Perfect, and all must be at length restor'd.
So God has greatly purposed, who would else,
In his dishonour'd works, himself endure
Dishonour, and be wronged without redress.”

COWPER.

CHAPTER III.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

I HAVE already stated a strong opinion that the language of scripture suggests the expectation of a kingdom to be established upon the earth, under the *personal* and glorious sceptre of Jesus Christ. I have remarked that his *divine* nature ought never to be separated from his *human* nature, in any view we take of his connexion with mankind. The great mystery revealed to man is “God manifest in the *flesh*,” and as such vested with the high commission “to destroy the works of the devil.” These works have been manifested in the seduction of our first parents from their allegiance to God; in the usurpation of that dominion with which Adam had been invested; and in the overthrow of order, justice, and charity in the world. “To destroy then these works,” cannot surely imply less than to *retrieve* the ruin; to restore

the allegiance of the earth to its Creator; to remove the curse under which it labours; “to abolish death” introduced by sin; to replace the crown upon the head from which it has fallen, and thus to realize the original purpose of God in the creation of Adam. The more limited interpretation, that *holy principles* shall one day very generally prevail in the world, but this still under the penalty of death, and beneath the original curse; the more limited assurance that after this spiritual triumph of Christ over a depraved race, a final judgment shall be instituted, and under *His* righteous verdict separate the wicked from the good, annihilate the earth by fire, and translate the righteous to another region, *there* to enjoy, in the presence of Christ, an eternal blessedness; this assurance, cheering and glorious as it may appear, would not at least fulfil the prediction that Christ should “destroy the works of the devil.” This work of rebellion and of malice would still be visible in the victory he had gained over a once happy world.

The simple fact of the *Earth annihilated*, and of a chosen race rescued indeed from ruin, but transferred to another scene for the enjoyment of their happiness, this fact would surely be at variance with the original record of the creation. “Let us make man after our Image, that

he may have dominion over the earth, and subdue it." The original scheme would in a great measure be frustrated; the holy sovereignty given to Adam upon the earth would be swept away, and the malice of Satan would in part have realized its impious aim. But if in the person of the Saviour Christ, the God incarnate, "the God manifest in the flesh;" if in his glorious person the guilt of man at length be removed; the curse be taken from the earth; death be abolished; allegiance be restored; Paradise be renewed in all its innocence, fruitfulness and joy; and if the *perpetuity* of all these blessings be secured under the agency of the Holy Ghost, and through the eternal union of the believer with the glorified Humanity of Jesus Christ, then indeed will the works of the devil, gigantic and mature in evil as they have appeared, at length be destroyed, and the Saviour amply justify his prophetic name, "the Second Adam," "the Lord from heaven." Then will his conquest be complete, and this world exhibit the very excellence and the very happiness which was implied in the approbation of Jehovah, when in the survey of his finished work he declared it to be "very good." The *Human* nature of Christ will thus be united to his *Divine* nature alike in the manifestation of his *kingly* as in his *prophetic* and *priestly* offices.

As man, he came to foretell his own conquests; as man, he came to taste of death, in order to atone for sin; and as man, he will come to reign and to enjoy with his redeemed on earth the effectual triumph of his grace.

Anxious to place before the Christian reader the impression which I have received, from the sacred scriptures, of this blessed victory, and fully established kingdom of Christ; before I proceed, as I intend, to the examination of the *language of scripture* upon these subjects, I will prefix a brief outline illustrative of the view I entertain of the nature and circumstances of this kingdom.

This Kingdom then will be contemporaneous with what is commonly called "the day of judgment," or "the day of the Lord," a term descriptive, not of the *ordinary period of twenty-four hours*, but the day foretold, and appropriate to him with whom "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." At the *Dawn* of this day, or rather period of time, "the first resurrection," or the resurrection of the "*dead in Christ*," will take place. These will awake fashioned after the glorious body of Christ; while the Saints at that time *living* on the earth will undergo a momentous change; a change, effected not through the ordinary medium of death, but of

some rapid and spiritual process, which will at once assimilate them to the glorified dead, now restored to immortal life ; and these saints, the dead thus revived, and the living thus changed, (and both glorified after the pattern of Christ,) these saints will ascend to meet the Lord, as he approaches towards the earth, in the mingled “ glories of his Father and of the holy angels.” These saints, thus revived and changed, will form the ELECT CHURCH, and be presented as the glorious BRIDE to Christ, being now “ made perfect, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Then will the joyful hour be arrived when the marriage-supper of the Lamb will be celebrated, “ because the bride shall have made herself ready.” Then will the happy and redeemed church, thus united to her Lord, prepare to reign with him on the earth, and to share his millenial glory. On his approach, the dreadful overthrow of impious and ungodly men will take place ; at least throughout the range of that apostate christendom, which so awfully shall have abased its noble privileges, and slighted its gracious warnings. At this time the Jewish nation will be miraculously restored to their own land ; and this long outcast people will again be honoured of God, and submit to the sway of the glorified Messiah their Prince. Satan will then be bound, and

his influence over the earth be cast out during the millenial period ; while the “ latter rains ” of the Eternal Spirit, now no longer limited as on the day of Pentecost, but falling in gentle showers over the whole earth, the time of the world’s conversion will be arrived, and the knowledge of the Lord “ will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.”

Over the world thus reduced to obedience, though not yet rescued entirely from death, (“ the *last* enemy to be destroyed,”) the Saviour and his glorified saints will REIGN in glory. The SUBJECTS of this kingdom will be composed of the *restored Jews*, the *converted heathen*, and the *remnant converted and saved* from the ungodly hosts who will have perished during the convulsions of the last plagues of the great judgment. During this peaceful dominion of the Messiah, the earth will exhibit a new spectacle of justice, allegiance, and felicity. The curse will be greatly mitigated, and the malignant excitements of Satan be unfelt. But towards the conclusion of this great day of God, impiety will once more prevail, and Satan be again permitted “ to deceive the nations ;” but a miraculous victory will finally subvert his power : the last judgment will take place ; Satan and his rebellious associates will be

cast into the lake of fire ; death be destroyed ; the curse *already taken* from the Elect Church at the first resurrection will now be removed entirely from the earth ; and every foe being put down ; the distinction between Jew and Gentile destroyed, and the mediatorial sceptre no longer needed, the mediatorial kingdom of the Messiah will be delivered up to the Father ; God “ will be all in all,” and the earth at length be transformed into a tranquil scene of happiness, an ever-during monument of praise to Him who shall have achieved its rescue from the terrific doom of death.

Upon the course of events *subsequent* to the millenial period, I shall refrain from making any detailed observations. The time to which they refer is distant, and the expressions which describe their character are few. I wish rather to dwell upon the events which are near, and which are more precisely marked out. To those *subsequent* events I shall only allude as it may be needful in their connexion with the great theme and outline of prophecy, the *Renovation of the present world*.

The points on which I propose briefly and humbly to appeal to scripture, are the following :

I. That Jesus Christ will return to the earth to establish a *visible* and *personal* kingdom.

II. That his chosen saints of “the first resurrection” will reign with him in that kingdom.

III. That the Jewish nation at this time will be restored to their own land, and regain their high distinction among the nations, under the kingly authority of Messiah their Prince.

IV. That Satan will then be restrained from the exercise of his malignant influence in the earth; and the world will exhibit, during the millenial period, a beauteous scene of truth, justice, and charity, under the hallowed sway of the Messiah and his glorified saints.

V. And thus that heavenly happiness is in fact the happiness of *heavenly principles*, to be enjoyed in the *presence of Christ*, whether upon the renewed *Paradise of Earth*, or in any other Paradise of the Universe of Love.

In entering upon the scriptural examination of these propositions, I renew my anxious wish to state them, not with the dogmatism of infallibility, but in the humility of faith. They appear to me to rest upon the plain, unequivocal, grammatical language of scripture, and to that test I desire to submit them. If, in the judgment of the candid, the interpretation adopted in the following pages will not *endure* that test, I should indeed be little disposed to ask its acceptance as any guide to the reli-

gious belief of others. I would bow with deep and grateful reverence to the decisions of the word of God; but I desire, unshackled by human authority, to enquire into the actual and unembarrassed import of that Word.

On this subject I refer with pleasure to the expressions of a living writer: “There is a limit to the revelations of the Bible about futurity, and it were a mental or spiritual trespass to go beyond it. The reserve which it maintains in its informations we also ought to maintain in our enquiries; satisfied to know little on every subject where it has communicated little, and feeling our way into regions which are at present unseen, no further than the light of scripture will carry us; but while we attempt not to be wise *above that which is written*, we *should attempt*, and that *most studiously*, to be wise *up to that which is written*. ”*

Under the influence of these feelings, let us now refer to the language of scripture in proof of the first proposition, “that Jesus Christ will return to establish a *personal* and *visible* Kingdom upon the Earth.”

In reference to the predicted return of our Lord to the world, there is, I believe, amongst true Christians no difference of opinion. All be-

* Chalmers’s St. John’s Sermons, p. 191.

lieve him to be the constituted Judge of quick and dead ; nor do I believe there to be any difference of opinion, either, as to the expectation that his religion will one day be the prevalent faith of the whole earth, or as to the belief that during the *intermediate period* he exercises an unseen and kingly authority over the church and the world. On these points I imagine all pious men to be agreed. The difference of opinion lies, *first*, in the *time* of his advent, and *secondly*, in the *nature* of his ultimate kingdom. In reference to the nature of his kingdom, the received opinion in modern times asserts it to be *exclusively spiritual*, the *reign of holy principles*. The following pages affirm it to be *personal* as well as *spiritual*; to be *visible* as well as *holy*. In reference to the *time* of his advent, the received opinion places it at the *end of the world*, in order to hold a final judgment; the following pages affirm it to take place at the *commencement* of his *reign*, in order to *introduce* the millenial period.

It might be expected that the language of scripture, delineating a prospective view of the dispensations of God, however plain and simple in itself, would still bear a shade of obscurity as to its actual import, on account of the *various* subjects which it condescends to explain. It unfolds subjects *external* and *tem-*

poral as well as subjects *spiritual* and *eternal*. The difficulty, the ambiguity will lie less, perhaps, in the *words* than in the *subjects* which those words explain. I do not here refer to prophetical emblems, but to prophecies simple and direct in the terms in which they are announced. At the time of the *first* advent of our Lord this ambiguity was very apparent. The scriptures foretold a *kingly Messiah*; and they foretold likewise a *suffering Saviour*. The pride of the Jewish nation readily separated these two subjects of prophecy; and hence the whole *ground of the controversy* between Christ and the Pharisees rested upon his actual claims to be the predicted *King of Israel*.

A similar ambiguity in our own day arises from the *twofold* character of Prophecy. The scriptures announce a *spiritual dominion* in the human heart; but they also announce, as it appears to me, a *local* and *glorious kingdom* upon the earth. The *first* subject of promise, I think, has been made the occasion of excluding the *last* from the general observation of the Christian Church. In the *double* meaning of which the words of Prophecy are capable, lies their ambiguity.

In this ambiguity lies also the *occasion* for candour, humility, prayer, and mutual charity. Our duty is to examine, not to dogmatise: to

compare scripture with scripture, and to supplicate the guidance of a heavenly light in all our researches after truth.

While presenting, then, to the Christian reader, the various passages of scripture to which I shall refer, I am perfectly aware, that, from his early and familiar intercourse with the idea of a *spiritual dominion*, they may seem to him to have no direct and necessary connexion with a local and terrestrial sovereignty: they may seem even to limit the promises of the future to an interpretation entirely spiritual. This limitation, however, I cannot hesitate to aver, increases tenfold the difficulties of scripture. Let the idea of a *local* and *visible* kingdom be added to the other, and the language of revelation becomes lucid and precise; at once accordant with all the analogies of the past, and declarative of a definite object yet to be realised in the momentous connexion of Jesus Christ with the world.

Let us commence the examination of scripture in reference to the kingdom of Christ, with the book of Psalms.

Psalm ii. 6. “*Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.* Ver. 8. *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*” Again, (Psalm viii. 4,) “*What is man that thou*

art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field: the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Governor, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!?

I would pause here to enquire whether this Psalm be fairly capable of a *spiritual interpretation*? Does it not refer, in the whole texture of its language, to the *original dominion over the earth* which God gave to man? In confirmation of this assertion, I beg the reader to turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews. (ch. i. v. 2.) In this verse Jesus Christ is styled “the appointed heir of all things.” He is also described to be greater than the angels, and to have the promise of the dominion over *the world to come*. This subjection “*of the world to come*” to his sway, is explained by the apostle to be *precisely the original grant* of the heirship *of the earth* to Adam, as depicted in the 8th Psalm; a circumstance which identifies Jesus Christ, in a sense truly emphatic, to be the “second Adam,” the true heir of this *earth*, in its *restored state* called “*the world to come*:” an expression I deem to

be *identical* with the “*new heaven and new earth*,” both of St. Peter and of the Apocalypse. The term, “*world to come*,” in the original, gives a precision to the idea which is not suggested by our translation. The words translated “*world to come*,” are, “την οικουμενην την μελλονσαν;” an expression which can only mean, “the habitable *Earth* to come.” Thus speaks, then, the apostle; (Heb. ii. 5.) “*For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God might taste death for every man.*

If I mistake not the meaning of the apostle, our blessed Lord is here described to be the antitype of Adam, and, as such, to have the ultimate *dominion of the earth*, not *spiritually* but *locally*, vested in his hands. As man, he was made

lower than the angels for the suffering of death ; that he might expiate the sins of his people, and open the way for their sovereignty, in him, over the *earth*. As the God-man he is, however, higher than the angels, *and is crowned with glory and honour*. But though he be king in fact, and though he now exercise a regal and spiritual authority while inhabiting the unseen world, yet he is not king in *actual* and *visible* dominion : “We see not yet *all things put under him*.”

This Psalm I am unable to explain by any spiritual interpretation ; and the comment of the apostle appears to me to place beyond a reasonable doubt, the *local sovereignty* of Christ “*in the earth to come* ;” even in the new condition of a renovated world. In this point of view, the 8th Psalm sheds a bright and steady light upon the nature and character of Christ’s kingdom, by identifying that kingdom with the original grant of dominion made to Adam.

I beg here to remark, once for all, that this view of the kingdom of Christ in no sense whatever *excludes* the prevalence of a spiritual and holy dominion : rather it *presupposes* it ; but it connects this momentous dominion with a *local* and external sovereignty. This important Psalm, to my mind thus incapable of a spiritual interpretation by any fair use of language, is

one of those MASTER KEYS which unlock the intricate wards of many a prophetic record.

Again, the 22nd Psalm, a Psalm ever deemed prophetic of the humiliation of Christ, and beginning with those affecting words extorted from him by the final anguish of the cross, “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!*” this Psalm refers in strong terms to his KINGLY exaltation. (Ver. 26, 27, 28.) It is here stated, that “*the meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee: for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the Governor among the nations.*” In a spiritual and providential manner he has always been king; but he is not yet king in the *manifestation* of his glory. Is not this kingdom, in fact, the same dominion spoken of in the 8th Psalm? It is not, indeed, as yet *established!* *All things are not yet put under him;* but at his second advent HE will come to take possession of the crown, to which he is the heir.

We refer next to the 40th Psalm, on which Bishop Horsley remarks: “This Psalm relates to the *second advent.* The Bridegroom is the *conquering, not the suffering Messiah;* the *marriage is celebrated after his victories;* and the

bride is the church catholic." In this Psalm the expression occurs in the 6th verse, as addressed to the Messiah at the time of his second advent : "*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.*" In similar language the 50th Psalm thus speaks : (ver. 3 :) "*Our God shall come and shall not keep silence ; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him : he shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may JUDGE his people. Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice, and the heavens shall declare his righteousness, for God is judge himself.*" Again, let us observe the 72nd Psalm. It is called, "A Psalm for Solomon ;" but for him surely only as a type of the kingly power of Christ, when manifested at his second advent. The whole Psalm is a beautiful delineation of his peaceful sovereignty over the earth, under which, (as in the 8th verse,) "*He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the rivers unto the ends of the earth. All kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him.*" "*And blessed,*" (adds the Psalmist, in the 19th verse,) "*And blessed be his glorious name for ever ; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.*"

Let us consider next the language of the 93d Psalm. "*The Lord reigneth, the world*

is established that it cannot be moved. The floods lift up their waves, but the Lord is mightier." In similar strains his advent and glorious dominion are described in the 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th and 100th Psalms. Indeed, these Psalms ought to be read together, (vid. Horsley in loc.) for they are descriptive of one and the same subject—the victorious coming of the Son of Man. I will only cite one or two passages. (Psalm xcvi. 5.) "*The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.*" (Psalm xcvi. 1.) "*O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory.*" (Psalm xcvi. 8, 9.) "*Let the floods clap their hands, let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth with righteousness, and the people with equity.*" I beg the reader ever to recall to mind the language of the 8th Psalm, as explained by the apostle to the Hebrews, as the true key to all these magnificent expressions of dominion and sovereignty. Can they be fairly applied without wresting them from their direct meaning, to the spiritual victories of the great Comforter? They include, indeed, his hallowed influence; but they are literally descriptive of the personal glory of Christ, when he returns as the second Adam, to possess and govern the earth.

I would here remark that the expression so often used, *to judge*—“*to judge with equity*,” is not simply to pass a verdict upon character; but to *sway the sceptre*, to *protect*, and *bless*. To sign a death-warrant, or to confer a favour, is not the entire office of a sovereign. To *guard*, to *cheer*, to regulate by the sceptre of power, is a far nobler exercise of kingly authority.

The whole number of these Psalms, from the 96th to the 100th inclusive, is thus descriptive of the Messiah’s reign of truth and gladness. They describe, in glowing terms, the overthrow of idolatry, the destruction of every antichristian confederacy, the restoration of Israel, and the triumph of the gospel among the heathen; and all this beneath the *visible rule* of the Redeemer. The 145th, 148th, and 149th Psalms, celebrate also in similar strains the ultimate conquest and triumphant sway of the redeemed saints.

In closing these citations from the book of Psalms, I beg the reader to consider, whether *the personal advent of Christ with his saints, to rule with equity and love upon the earth*, be not the idea which explains almost all the difficulties of these Songs of Zion. The frequent allusions to *foes*, and *slander*, and *blasphemy*; the awful demonstrations of *vengeance to the ungodly*; the *solemn imprecations*, from which many turn away as if scarcely consistent with the delinea-

tion of Christian charity ; all these are entirely referable to the great day and circumstances of Christ's kingly judgment. They are not descriptive of *personal* conflict, and of *individual* animosity ; they are all prophetic of the great controversy of the Messiah with the *infidel*, the *impious*, and the *licentious*. They are prophetic of the ultimate intentions of God with respect to the *impenitent*, in that approaching day, when the agony and scorn under which the Saviour first became “ manifested in the flesh ” will be exchanged for the honour, the glory, and the victory of his second advent into the world.

CHAPTER IV.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

FROM these references to the Book of Psalms, let us pass on to a selection of passages from the sacred writings, which are considered to be more directly prophetical of the days of the Messiah.

I would, however, delay for a moment, to entreat the reader to enter upon this examination in a spirit of *seriousness* and *prayer*. It may perhaps be a difficulty with some pious minds to become *practically* interested in these subjects. They are too much occupied with the cares, sorrows, and trials of the present scene, to feel any practical sympathy with the probable or possible lot of those who may live in some distant age of the earth. The nature and circumstances of the millenial reign, or the final results of this terrestrial system, these subjects hitherto accounted merely speculative, have

much less interest in their view than the conflicts and sins and sadness of the passing day; and they prefer to fix down their thoughts to those more palpable and constant anxieties with which their daily intercourse with God is wont to connect them. But if these subjects form a part of the revelation which God has made to man; if, on the one hand, it be the very nature and scope of Christianity, to raise our views beyond the contracted range of our own immediate necessities, to the great themes of mercy and of love, by which a redeemed race will ultimately be blessed; and if, on the other hand, there be an awful though unseen conflict between Christ and Satan yet unaccomplished as to its results upon the condition and welfare of the present world; if these things be so, can we deem the serious examination of the future prospects of the church, to stand unconnected with all the higher interests of charity, or with the just illustration of the divine glory? Are we not besides in danger of selfishness in our religion, as well as in our more earthly pursuits? "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's;" and the disinclination which we may feel as to the examination of the future cha-

racter of the Christian dispensation, may perhaps find its strength partly in this principle of unholy selfishness. The gospel, it may be, is attractive to us too exclusively, because it applies itself to our individual guilt and weakness. It *does* speak, (oh ! if it did not, it would not be suitable to man !) it does speak, and that powerfully to our individual sadness ; it draws us apart, as it were, from the noise and throng of the world's crowded population, to enter into deep communion with our solitary wants ; but is not this individual application of its sacred remedies connected also with the ultimate design of uniting us to Christ in the scene of his triumph and glory ? Ought not then the manifestation of that glory, and the progress of his mediatorial plan to be greatly interesting to our minds ? If " we love him, because he first loved us," shall we not go on to love him, for his own excellence, and for the delight which he takes in the redemption of our fellow-creatures, as well as ourselves, from the thralldom of sin ? Ought we to shrink away from any delineation which he may have deigned to make of his future intercourse with the world in which we dwell ? Ought we to deem it a wearisome task to trace the map of his providence, and to follow, as far as it may be possible, the course of his triumphs over the

powers of evil, by which our happiness has been so cruelly assailed? Ought we not rather to feel cheered by the mighty grasp which he has taken of human welfare, and rejoice to anticipate the final victory which he will achieve over sin and Satan? I cannot but think, that the contemplation of these subjects is calculated to exert a daily and important influence upon our spiritual character. Would our Divine Master have put the prayer of hope within our lips, if it were not thus connected with his own glory and our welfare? Would he have taught us incessantly to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in EARTH, as it is done in heaven," if it were not his intention to interest our minds in the expectation of that kingdom? May he, then, condescend to shed a serious and devotional influence upon our hearts, as we proceed to examine the declarations of his word!

In the second chapter of the book of Isaiah, the second verse, we find these words: "*And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.*" The fourth verse: "*And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares and their*

*spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Again: (Isaiah ix. 6:) “For unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment, and with justice, from henceforth even for ever.” Consider next: (Jeremiah iii. 16:) “And it shall come to pass when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, they shall say no more, The ARK of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it. At that time they shall call Jerusalem, the THRONE of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem.” The force of this passage, I would observe, lies in the contrast between the *Ark* and the *Throne of the Lord*. Formerly to the Jewish nation the *Ark* was the type of the Divine presence and power; but in this day, **CHRIST**, the antitype, will himself possess the throne. The next reference is to Jeremiah xxiii. 5. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and*

shall execute judgment and justice in the earth: In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." (Jeremiah xxxiii. 20.) "Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season: Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne."

Examine next Micah ii. 12. "I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee: I will surely gather the remnant of Israel, I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold. The BREAKER is come up before them: they have broken up, and passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their KING shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them." (Micah iv. 1.) "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains." (3rd verse.) "And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off." (4th verse.) "They shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid. For all people will walk every one in the name of his God." (7th verse.) "And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation, and the Lord

shall reign over them in mount Zion, from henceforth, even for ever.” (Zechariah ii. 10.) “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.” (Zechariah vi. 12.) “Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his THRONE, and he shall be a priest upon his throne.” (Zechariah ix. 9.) “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy KING cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.” The former part of this prophecy was fulfilled in the first, the latter yet remains to be fulfilled

at the second Advent. (Zech. xii. 8.) “*In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and he that is feeble among them at that day, shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the ANGEL of the LORD before them.*” (Mal. iii. 1.) “*Behold, I will send my messenger: and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple. Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.*” (4th verse.) “*Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.*” With these prophetic scriptures, I beg the reader to connect the declaration of the Angel to Mary, (Luke i. 31.) “*And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the THRONE of his father DAVID; and he shall REIGN over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*”

Let us here arrest our progress to weigh the import of the passages already cited from these Jewish prophets. The quotations are indeed but specimens of numerous and similar decla-

rations connected with the same unfulfilled events. It will probably be at once admitted, that these passages of the prophetical writings are at least descriptive of a very *wide dominion*, of a very *glorious kingdom*, to be established by the Messiah, which shall include both Jew and Gentile, and shall stretch at length from shore to shore. Every pious mind will probably assent to this point ; but to the question, “ Do these prophetic Scriptures suggest the notion of the *personal reign of Christ?*” many may return a negative answer. We are accustomed to give to these, and similar promises, an interpretation entirely spiritual. The justness of this interpretation is, however, a matter of serious enquiry ; for I would beg to ask, why is such a continual stress laid upon “ *the throne of David;*” upon “ *the covenant of day and night not being more firm, than the promise that David shall not want a man to sit upon his throne?*” Why is so great a stress laid upon “ *the house of David being as God, as the angel of the Lord of hosts before the people?*” Is a sense exclusively spiritual adequate to explain these terms ? Is not Christ *Man* as well as God ? Is he not Mary’s Son, and as such heir to the throne of David ? Was not the land of Canaan given to Abraham’s seed for an inheritance ; and is not Christ the true heir, as the human descendant

of Abraham? To say that “the throne of David” is a spiritual empire exclusively; the throne of the human heart; the moral sway of Christ over his people, whether Jew or Gentile—to say this, is surely to warp the legitimate meaning of words, and to affirm that because types of spiritual things exist, that therefore every promise is a type of a spiritual blessing. Let it be willingly granted, that the kingdom set forth by these passages of Scripture is a spiritual kingdom. It is a cheering and delightful truth; but let it be well weighed, whether the connexion of Christ with Judah, as the heir of David, which he truly is, and that in no mystical, but in a literal sense; let it be weighed whether his *humanity* be not strangely forgotten in this exclusively spiritual interpretation, and whether, while the prophets announce his reign from one end of the earth to the other, they do not likewise announce his *personal* return to earth to *rebuild the throne of David?* Whether they do not announce his advent to reign over his people, not as once when he led them from Egypt, by the emblem of his presence, in the pillar of cloud and fire; or when, in the luminous oracle between the cherubims of the temple he dwelt in Judah, but to reign in the midst of them by the visible mani-

festation of his glorified humanity; as the undoubted heir to that kingdom where he once lay trodden under foot, despised and rejected of men; now to claim at length the right of sovereignty which covered his head in a mystery, when he expired beneath the superscription over his cross, a superscription read alike of rulers and of people, "JESUS of Nazareth the KING of the JEWS?" Let this question at least be duly examined and candidly answered.

But let us, in the next place, refer to a few passages which more *plainly* bear upon the *visible glory of Christ*. When our Redeemer ascended to heaven, from the Mount of Olives, an angel thus addressed the disciples, as they gazed upon his upward flight (Acts i. 10.) "*And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven.*" I beg the reader to compare this saying of the angels with the prophecy of Zechariah (Zech xiv. 1.) "*Behold the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee; for I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; (third verse) Then shall the*

Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle : and his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives," (the place, recollect, from whence he ascended,) "*which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley ; and ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains ; yea ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and the LORD my GOD SHALL COME, and all the SAINTS with thee."*

The coincidence of this prophecy of Zechariah with that of the angels at the Ascension, is surely very remarkable, while the object of the return of Christ to the world is very satisfactorily pointed out by Zechariah in the succeeding verses of this same chapter, (Zech. xiv. S.) "*And it shall be in that day*" (the day, that is, when his feet shall again stand on Mount Olives) "*that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea ; in summer and in winter shall it be,*" (that is, they shall flow *perpetually*, the tide of mercy shall not ebb.) "*And the Lord shall be king over all the earth ; in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.*" Is it, I now ask, any wresting of words from their simple mean-

ing, to interpret this prophecy, thus connected with the history of the Ascension, to promise the personal descent of Christ upon Mount Olives? in order to put down his foes, to repossess the throne of David, and to be king over the whole earth? Can a lower meaning be fairly given to these declarations? For while they affirm a blessed, and healing, and spiritual influence over the human heart, under the figure of "the living waters going out from Jerusalem," do they not connect with this spiritual dominion, a *terrestrial* and *visible* sovereignty over the earth, of which sovereignty Jerusalem will be the central and metropolitan city? And to teach us that this *coming of Christ* to Mount Olivet is not to annihilate, but to bless the world, by the peaceful sceptre of his grace, we are plainly informed by the prophet, in the 16th verse, "*And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year, to worship the king, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.*" Is not an intimation here given, that in this happy millenial reign, representatives shall go up from all lands to Jerusalem, as if to bind the peaceful earth in closer bands of allegiance, by the common offering of joy and praise, in the central city of Messiah's empire? Formerly they came from

the twelve tribes alone up to Jerusalem to worship, now they will come from all lands, because Jerusalem will be the joy, not of one country, but of all the earth ; “ for there is the throne of David,” and there the glorious manifestations of Messiah the Prince.

This interpretation is corroborated by various circumstances and sayings connected with our Lord’s first advent to the earth. Thus (John i. 49.) “ *Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art THE KING of ISRAEL. Jesus answered and saith unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou ? Thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.*” Are not these expressions descriptive of the peaceful and abiding homage, which Nathanael would himself behold as paid to the Messiah, in that *very place* in which at *that time* the heir of Judah had not “ where to lay his head.”

Did Nathanael attach any other meaning to the title under which he addressed his Lord, “ Thou art the King of Israel,” than the Sovereign of the terrestrial throne of David ? And did our Lord reject in any measure that sovereignty, when he assured his “ guileless” fol-

lower, that he should see him at length, not in the mysterious humiliation under which he then stood, but in the splendour of his regal glory, honoured and attended by the angelic messengers of his kingdom? And had not the Disciples the same idea of his kingdom (Acts i.) when they asked him if now he were about to *restore* the kingdom to Israel? and did he correct their notion as erroneous? Rather he left them in full possession of the expectation which they cherished, but threw a veil over “the time and the season” of his glorious epiphany to the world!

Again, (Matthew xix. 28.) “*Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the REGENERATION when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also*” (that is, the apostles) “shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” What is this *regeneration*, when the Son shall sit on the throne of his glory? It cannot be in heaven, for death and disorder have not occupancy there. Seek an explanation of it in (Acts iii. 19.) “*Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of REFRESHING shall come from the presence of the Lord. And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the times of RESTITUTION of all*

things." This *restitution* cannot be in heaven, for no heritage has been lost there. What then is this *restitution of all things?* Is not the question answered by the saine apostle who first spake these words at Jerusalem? Is it not answered in his address to the strangers of the world then existing, but to the heirs of a better, (2 Pet. iii. 10.) "*The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness: looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.*" This language may at first appear to predict the utter ruin and physical annihilation of the earth; but this idea the succeeding context must correct. The ruin is evidently the ruin of the *earthly and guilty system* under which God has been dishonoured and sin has triumphed. But at length the triumph ceases. The whole rebellious system—"all that is in the world, the lust of the eye, and the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life;" the abuse of authority, the bloodshed of oppression, the havoc of ambition,

the cruel ravages of sensuality, the iron yoke of ignorance, these will be utterly dissolved ; this system will melt in the fervent heat of the divine indignation, and will be exchanged for the peaceful government of the Son of God. Is this an individual and presumptuous interpretation ? Hear the apostle himself, who, cheered beneath the gloom of impending judgment, by the assurance of Messiah's reign, exclaims in the 13th verse, “ Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH,” (that is, a new and glorious system of truth and love upon Earth,) “ *wherein dwelleth righteousness.*”

Two considerations connect these “ new heavens and new earth ” with the renovation of the present material world. The first is, that it will be the “ abode of righteousness.” Such a declaration were superfluous in reference to heaven : *there* sin has never dwelt. The apostle evidently expresses a contrast—a contrast between the former state of crime, and the present state of righteousness. This contrast limits the interpretation to the existing material earth. The other consideration grows out of the preceding assertion of the apostle, that “ the old world ” “ *perished,* ” and that the *present* system is reserved for a similar destruction. Of what kind then was the perdition of the antediluvian

world? It was not annihilation, but devastation; a devastation, however, followed by the bow of mercy in the cloud, and the promise of seed-time and harvest. A deluge swept away the inhabitants, but left the earth to be the abode of a succeeding race: and thus the perdition of fire predicted by the apostle, like that of water predicted by Noah, may lead to the purification, not to the physical destruction of the earth.

The prospect of such a renovation to the Christian, is surely at once solemn, cheerful, and practical. Is it not calculated to bring into intelligent and efficient contact with his mind the authority, wisdom, and power of God the Saviour? Does it not give a character of distinctness to the object of his original incarnation and humanity? Does it not rescue the world from the absolute desolation of orphanage, while it consecrates all the variety and loveliness of the material objects around us, by their connexion with a Paradise yet to be restored to our full, and perhaps eternal enjoyment? Does it not cheer the wearied spirit amidst the conflicts and pollutions of the present scene? Does it not lead forward the eye, aching with the spectacles of oppression and crime, to those brighter and better times when righteousness and peace shall be the bulwarks of authority,

and the love of Christ the admitted foundation of social happiness ?

Incarnate Saviour ! exalted Jesus ! come, then, according to thy promise ! How long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph ? How long shall men blaspheme thy name, trample under thy laws, despise thy goodness, and cast aside thy authority ? How long shall Satan rule that world, which thou didst bless and designate as “ very good ? ” Oh ! yet a little while, and thou shalt fulfil thy people’s hopes and realize the bliss thou hast prepared for them ! Yet a little while, and thy feet shall stand upon the hill of Zion, and thy rest shall be glorious in the midst of thy redeemed Israel !

CHAPTER V.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

A FATAL indisposition to connect itself in any *direct* manner with God, characterizes the present condition of the human mind. To the vague and distant notion of Almighty power, our *frail* and *mortal* nature lends a willing attention ; but to the undisguised assertion of the claims of God upon our allegiance and regard, our *guilty* and *selfish* nature puts forth its strong resistance. There is nothing disinterested or generous in the popular notions of religion. These notions associate themselves with the weakness of infancy and age—with the agonies of disease and of death, rather than with the strength of life, and the maturity of the intellectual powers.

We may trace an additional illustration of this disposition in the feelings which the subject of prophecy excites in the breast of many.

They are ready to hold up, almost to ridicule, the idea of looking forward into futurity with any thing like seriousness of expectation as to the result. To what other cause than to a secret repugnance to God's authority can this be attributed? For if God has deigned to give a revelation of his will to man, is it not reasonable to suppose that such a revelation should throw light upon the future as well as upon the present? and would not a religious mind be forward to gain every possible insight into that future? Why then are men so ready to attach the idea of credulity, presumption or folly to all active solicitude as to the nature of the events which eternity may conceal? Because credulity and presumption have sometimes stood associated with this religious solicitude, is this alliance of necessity or of accident? May not intemperance and disease accompany the use of food? yet would he not be guilty of very great folly, who should refuse bread because some have abused it to their own injury? Under the guards of discretion and of earnest prayer, may not an inquiry into the future be among the most important subjects to which the attention of the mental faculties can be directed?

Is it then unreasonable to ask, even from the casual or worldly reader, an honest scrutiny into the nature of the reluctance which he may

feel to the fair consideration of the prophetic scriptures ? Are the scriptures true ? Is Christianity a real portraiture of the divine will ? Did the Son of God become man ? Did he bleed upon the cross ? Did he awake from the grave ? Did he ascend to glory, and did he command his religion to be promulgated under a promise to return to the world in order to judge the quick and the dead ?

If this series of events form a part of the holy volume, can it be indiscreet to contemplate more closely the circumstance of his *departure* from the earth ; and to search diligently into the nature of the promises which attest the assurance of his *return* ? Can any man reasonably object to this scrutiny, except he secretly deny his authority, or despise his grace ? I know, alas ! that men will continue to mock and to vilify the declarations of Jehovah ; for “ the carnal mind is enmity against God.” I know that men will abet each other in the mad resolve to chase into obscurity the claims of God ; but I know also, that the league of human friendship for such a purpose, is baseless as the “ fabric of a vision,” and can in no respect invalidate the claims which it affects to despise. I know, on the other hand, that the words of God are bright, living, enduring, imperishable words, which the allotments of eternity will

confirm. "*I know that the Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth;*" and that confusion and despair in that day will be the lot of those who shall have no sympathy with his character, and no conformity to his will. Therefore it is that I would entreat the gainsayer, if such should rest his eye upon this brief page, to pause ere he enter into deliberate conflict with the Being who created him! Therefore it is that I would address this word of affectionate counsel to him, not as a speculative dogma which with impunity he may scatter to the winds ; but as a practical and eternal truth, associated with all the dearest interests of his soul ! The terrific results of a controversy with God have not yet been manifested to his individual experience ; but is this any reason that those results should not ultimately force themselves upon his attention ? Is the stillness which hangs about the new-made grave, any satisfactory evidence that no startling voice shall ever awaken to life and to judgment the mouldering form which sleeps beneath its sod ?

Under this impression let us resume the examination of Scripture in reference to the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For this end I beg the particular attention of the reader to a twofold prophecy in the book of

Daniel. The era at which Daniel delivered these prophecies, was a period of time very calamitous to the Jewish nation. Carried captive to Babylon, they groaned beneath the iron yoke of the Chaldean king. By the good providence of God several of the youthful captives were placed both in the household and in the special favour of the reigning Monarch. It thus pleased God to make the curiosity of this Monarch the occasion of unfolding a distinct outline of successive events, from that hour to the end of the present dispensation.

The Assyrian king, we are told, was troubled by a dream ; the subject of which, while it had escaped his memory, had excited his curiosity. He applied to his astrologers to bring back the vanished impression, in all its original vivacity, to his mind. Their inability to fulfil his command inflamed him with anger, and he issued a despotic and cruel mandate for the destruction of their whole order. This command included Daniel and his pious companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. This eventful history we find recorded in Dan. ii. 14. "*Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon : He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king ? Then Arioch made the*

thing known to Daniel. Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah his companions ; that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret ; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.”

The circumstances of this history may well arrest the attention of the reader. The inexperienced Daniel brought the painful tidings of the king's displeasure to his friends, and immediately they spread the matter in prayer before God. “*They desired his mercies concerning this thing.*” But can we refuse to recognise on this occasion, the existence of higher feelings than those connected with the mere love of life? These associates in captivity were young, generous, and brave. They exhibited in after days that firm and patient heroism which belongs alone to the fear of God. One of this little band was afterwards cast into the den of lions ; and the other three were plunged alive into the seven times heated furnace. They loved the truth, and were ready to die in its defence. How inferior to this calm fortitude of godliness, is worldly daring! The contrast is that between the muscular fibre of the tiger and

the patient force of intellect—the quiet confidence of moral strength !

In this condition of mind, prayer would be connected less with the desire of life, than with the manifestation of the glory of Jehovah. They were living in a heathen court, and the event in question might prove an illustrious occasion to exhibit the power, wisdom, and providence of the true God. I love to recall the living image of these righteous men, and to mark the existence of practical holiness beneath the sternest attitudes of despotism and of crime. Oh! it cheers the heart amidst the moral cowardice of mankind, to mark the erection of such a trophy in a land of foes !

But to resume the narrative : “ *Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered, and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever ; for wisdom and might are his, and he changeth the times and the seasons. He removeth kings and setteth up kings ; he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding ; he revealeth the deep and secret things ; he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee and praise thee, O thou God of my Fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might ; and hast made known unto me what we desired of thee : for thou hast*

made known unto us the king's matter. Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus unto him : Destroy not the wise men of Babylon : bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation. Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah that will make known unto the king the interpretation. The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded, cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king ; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these : as for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed ; what should come to pass hereafter : and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great IMAGE: this great Image whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a STONE was cut out without hands, which smote the Image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them. And the STONE that smote the IMAGE became a great mountain, and filled the whole EARTH. This is the dream: and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings, for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all: thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise ANOTHER kingdom inferior to thee, and ANOTHER third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the FOURTH kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these,

shall it break in pieces, and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided: but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. (Ver. 44.) *And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms: and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter."*

I would now beg the reader to connect with the smiting of this mysterious STONE the declaration of Jesus Christ; (in Matt. xxi. 42, 44;) "*Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, (when it shall smite as in the vision of Daniel,) it will grind him to powder.*" What a comment is this, by the lips of Christ, on the foregoing prophecy of Daniel! Who can doubt the meaning of this mighty, but mysterious STONE? at once the foundation of hope to

the faithful, and the uplifted weapon of judgment to the sinner?

To enable us to form a more just opinion of the real import of the vision of the IMAGE, I would refer to a second vision of Daniel, different indeed in emblems, but similar in its interpretation. (Dan. vii. 2.) "*Daniel spake, and said, I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea, and four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagles' wings: and I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked. And it was lifted up from the earth, and a man's heart was given to it: and behold another beast, a second like to a bear.*" (Ver. 6.) *After this I beheld, and lo, a second like a leopard.* (Ver. 7.) *After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a FOURTH beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it; and it had TEN HORNS.* *I considered the HORNS; and behold there came up among them another little HORN, before whom three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots.* And behold in THIS HORN were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. I beheld, till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like

the pure wool. His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the HORN spake; I beheld, even till the BEAST was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. (Ver. 15.) I Daniel was grieved in my spirit, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are FOUR KINGS, which SHALL arise out of the earth; but the SAINTS of the most High shall take the KINGDOM and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others; and of the ten horns, and of the other whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same HORN made war with the SAINTS, and prevailed against them, UNTIL the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High, and the time came that the SAINTS possessed the KINGDOM. Thus he said, the fourth beast shall be the FOURTH KINGDOM upon earth. And the TEN HORNS out of this kingdom are TEN KINGS

that shall arise; and another shall rise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first; and he shall subdue three kings: and he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High. (Verse 26.) But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion—to consume and to destroy it unto the end; and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”

These visions bear the bright impression of a divine original. They unfold, in a few words, the whole outline of the political and moral history of the human race within the confines of the Roman world, from the time of Daniel to the hour of the second advent of Christ. The *first* vision, under the emblem of an IMAGE, foretells a succession of monarchies, the last of which, when broken into TEN parts, is smitten to shivers by the STONE cut out of the mountain. The *second* vision foretells the same succession of FOUR monarchies; the division of the last into ten powers, under the emblem of ten horns; and the existence of an *eleventh* power arising after the former division of ten. The eleventh power subdues three of the ten, and directs his special enmity against the saints of

God, until at length these persecuted SAINTS themselves RECEIVE the Kingdom, and REIGN with HIM to whom the Ancient of Days hath assigned an everlasting dominion. These prophecies no human hand could have traced, because no human mind could thus have pierced through the dark and interfolded records of futurity. The Omniscient and the Almighty alone could have thrown back those folds, and have exhibited the successive events which they concealed. Let any man compare with these visions the history of the world during the last two thousand three hundred years, and let him stand astonished before the wisdom and the strength of a captive of Judah, a youthful stranger in a foreign land ! A ray from the Eternal Throne illuminated his mind ; the visions of the Omniscient made him wise. The Record still lives upon the mysterious page ; and while two thousand years of conflict and of crime have rolled their destructive waves over the deep-wrought characters, they remain imperishable ; to the eye of faith still brilliant as the burning flame !

The whole series of prophetic events now I think approaches fast to its termination. The four predicted monarchies have appeared. Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome, fill up the whole space of intermediate history. The empire

of Rome, the fourth monarchy, (according to the delineation of one little disposed to vindicate the authority of God—I mean the Italian historian, Machiavel,) amidst the struggles of the northern Goths, has been broken into *ten* sovereignties; three of which, an *eleventh* power, diverse from the other ten, the sanguinary Papacy prevailed to subdue. With bitter malice and unfaultering resolution, during many successive centuries, this Papacy has “worn out the saints of the Most High,” while it has attempted, practically at least, to annihilate by its traditions the eternal councils of God. But the judgment has already begun to sit—the papal throne has tottered to its base, and the Kingdom of the Son of God hastens to the hour of its manifestation, alike to the confusion of his foes, and to the joy and glory of his saints!

The slight difference between these two visions of Daniel is worthy of observation, and is confirmatory of the truth of both. In the first vision the *Stone* possesses the Kingdom; in the second the *Saints*, who are represented as thus victorious with a peculiar propriety, because in *this* vision they are previously represented as “worn down” and destroyed by the persecuting power of their formidable Accuser.

That these visions foretell a mighty King-

dom, no man who considers the subject will be disposed to deny: but the question is important—what is the character to be assigned to it? Is this Kingdom exclusively *spiritual*, or is it *spiritual* and also *personal*? In my own judgment the structure of the prophecy requires it to be *personal* as well as *spiritual*. The imagery is not *various*, but *one*. The Kingdoms are of *one kind*, and must be interpreted together. If the four monarchies be *spiritual monarchies*—if they only mark out the *reign of principles*, then may the *dominion* which *destroys* them be a dominion of *principles likewise*. But if Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome, have been *visible dominions* and *temporal sovereignties*; then must the Kingdom of the STONE and the Kingdom of the SAINTS be likewise *visible* and *terrestrial*. The rules of fair criticism appear to demand this conclusion, and thus lead us to anticipate the hour when persecution and despotism shall have run out their disastrous course, and “*the Kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.*”

Scepticism may smile in scorn; philosophy may attempt her futile reasonings, and sensuality may wish them true, but the WORD of GOD abides for ever. *No fifth universal monarchy will ever have dominion upon this theatre of*

earth. The effort has been recently made, and the attempt has failed. The foundations of a modern empire, laid deep in the genius and power of military strength, have upheaved to their destruction, and the earth breathes for a moment in the pause of the terrific storm. But the time of repose may be short. Let the wicked tremble; let the wicked mourn; let the wicked believe, repent, and live! Yet a little while, and these prophecies will attest the fidelity of Him who uttered them!

Christian! the last tempest may soon gather around thee, but “be of good cheer.” “Lift up thy head, for thy redemption draweth nigh.” He whose bleeding memorials of love have been often spread before thee in this lone and desert land, He shall come in the *Sovereignty* of *truth* and *power*, to tell thee by the *visible* glories of his Kingdom, that the doctrine of atonement is not a delusion, nor the *REGENERATION* of the *WORLD* a fable or a dream!

CHAPTER VI.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

IN reference to the prophecies of Daniel, considered in the former chapter, it is needful to consider an argument in favour of the personal character of the Kingdom of Christ, which is clearly furnished by the *chronological date* there assigned to the *commencement* of his reign. If we recur to the prophecy of the emblematic beasts, (Dan. vii.) and to that of the image, (Dan. ii.) we shall find that in the former (chap. vii. 7.) the prophet saw “a fourth beast dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.” These ten horns are interpreted, in verse 24, to be “ten kings,” or sovereignties, “that *shall arise*.” These same ten kingdoms are in the former vision of the Image represented by the ten toes of the feet; and in the second chapter, 24th verse, we are informed, that “*in the days of*

these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." In further illustration of the subject, we find that the "Stone cut out from the mountain" does *not* smite *the legs* of the Image, which *legs* represent the *unbroken* or *imperial* form of the Roman Empire, but it smites upon the *feet*, that is, upon the Roman Empire in its *divided state*, or when broken into the *ten kingdoms*. It is "*in the days of these kings*" that the Stone smites the Roman Image.

If the true interpretation of this Kingdom be exclusively *spiritual*, would not the Stone have been represented as smiting rather upon the *legs* of the image, that is, upon the first or *unbroken state* of the Roman Empire, than upon the *divided state*? For let the progress of Christianity be considered during the yet *undivided state* of the Roman Empire. Had not the gospel been preached over the Roman world, and had not the deeply-rooted system of Polytheism been actually upturned while yet the empire remained in the hands of a single monarch? Would not the change from idolatry to Christianity, throughout that vast empire, have justified the prophetic representation of smiting the Image, while yet in its *imperial* form? Had not a *spiritual* reign of Christ been fully apparent during the progress of the gospel

in those ages, and had not his religion become at length externally dominant over the *whole empire*? And yet the “Kingdom” is not represented as in any measure to have been erected *then*. The Stone had not *then* smitten the Image. It does *not* descend with its destructive energy *until* the empire is *broken* into ten parts. It was reserved for “*the days of those kings*” to witness the foundation of that Kingdom which “God would set up.” This Kingdom must therefore have some essential distinction which shall *forbid* it to be *identical* with a simply *spiritual* influence upon the human heart. That influence had already been conflicting with idolatry during four hundred years in the Roman world; and had at length achieved the external victory, and yet the Stone *had not smitten*. The imperial sovereignty remained unbroken. The *spiritual* Power of Christ, I repeat, destroyed the polytheism of Rome under its imperial form of government, and yet the Stone *had not smitten*. The conquest of the Stone cannot therefore be purely a *spiritual* conquest: the conquest must have a temporal and *external form*, as well as a *spiritual* character. I see not how otherwise the interpretation can fit the emblem. It is “*in the days of those kings*;” and *those kings are to be smitten and destroyed*, and the supreme *external sovereignty* is to be

transferred to the Son of God. In the emphatic language of the 44th verse, “*the Kingdom shall not be left to other people.*”

To do further justice to this argument, and to place before the mind of the reader the astonishing character of the moral victory achieved by Christianity in the Roman earth, while yet the imperial form remained, and during which the stone had not *commenced* to smite, I beg to subjoin a powerful delineation of that victory in the words of a recent writer upon the Apocalypse :—

“The triumph of Christianity,” he observes, “was come. Theodosius, a statesman, a soldier, and a man of virtue, was called from obscurity to the empire. The lingering reluctance of the throne to repress the ancient superstition, was instantly changed for a wise and bold activity. A succession of decrees, like successive flashes of light from the sword of the Spirit, smote the worship of the idols, shut the heathen temples, and established Christianity the religion of the Roman world. Thus fell paganism ; the great antagonist of truth, purity, and wisdom, the pamperer of human passion and pride ; splendid and stately to the eye, but made to be the oppressor and the murderer. At this distance the mind still contemplates it, like the ruins of one of its own

temples, and wondering at its stupendous extent, the depth and age of its foundation, the grandeur and costliness of the embellishment lavished upon it by the genius of antiquity, may well doubt that it was either raised or overthrown by the strength of man. But it was the house of darkness; vice and blood were the offerings upon its altars; its fall was the freedom of nations; the beginning of a day which shall know no end; and loud and lofty be the thanksgiving for that fall which let in light upon mankind."

"The infidel* historian acknowledges the singularity and completeness of *this ruin*. He had already laboured to prove that the progress of Christianity was accountable on natural grounds. His proof failed; for nothing less than the mind of heaven could have conceived Christianity in the darkness of heathenism, and nothing feebler than the divine arm could have upborne it in the tyranny of Rome. But of the five Causes which he alleged, the substance is not far from the truth. Christianity was made to impress the human understanding. Its generous and holy principles were congenial to all that was unstained in the human heart. And what was this congeniality but the additional evidence

* Gibbon, chap. 28.

that it was the work of God? No conformity of circumstance can ever account for the *origin* of Christianity.

"A being, known to the world only as a Jewish peasant, delivered a system of doctrine which overthrew not merely some feeble philosophy, or some harsh and popular superstition, but both theory and establishment of the State Religion, guarded and fought for by the armed strength of the most powerful government of the greatest of all empires. Thousands and tens of thousands owed their daily bread to their connexion with that religion. Millions on millions had identified it with all their conceptions of life, of enjoyment, and of that obscure hope in which the heathen saw a life to come. The noble families owed to it a large portion of their rank and influence. The emperor himself was the High Priest. Old tradition, invigorated into living belief, made it the pledge of safety to the empire; a sacred protector, without which the glories of Roman dominion was destined to inevitable ruin. Yet against this colossal and haughty edifice—the consummate work of subtlety and strength—stood forth a solitary being, and at his word the whole pile fell; the great fortress that towered up to heaven, came wall and gate to the ground. And by what means had this been done? By

nothing that can find a parallel in the history of human impulse. Signal austerity, enthusiasm, wealth, military genius, the promise of splendid success, visionary doctrines, the displays of a sensual paradise, have made proselytes in barbarous ages, or among the loose creeds of contending heresies. But the Founder of Christianity cast away all those weapons of our lower nature. He shrank from no declaration of the most unpalatable truth. He told the Jew that his spiritual pride was a deadly crime. He declared that the cherished impurity of the Gentile was a deadly crime. He plucked up the temporal ambition of his followers by the roots, and told them that if they were to be great, it must be through the grave. In the full view of unpopularity, desertion and death, he pronounced to the Jews the extinction of their national existence ; to the Disciples their lives of persecution. At the time of his death his name had scarcely passed beyond his despised province ; and when at length it reached Rome, it was known only in contemptuous connexion with that of a crowd of unfortunate men condemned to the rack and the flame. Yet within the life of man, his religion constituted the worship of Emperor and people ; his doctrines were acknowledged as inspiration, and the civilized world bowed down before him as the

God, whom the Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain.

“These wonders are familiar to the Christian; but they are still wonders; the mightiest phenomena on which the spirit of man can gaze; the stars of our mortal twilight, and worthy of our loftiest admiration, till the gates of the grave shall be unbarred, and the vision of glory shall spread before us without a cloud.”—*Croly on the Apocalypse*, p. 307.

If then a *Change momentous* and *entire* as this in the religion of the Empire, is *not even* the *commencement* of the Kingdom of the Messiah, can we refuse to find the *true* character of that Kingdom in his *personal* glory, his *visible and local* sovereignty?

In full accordance with these emblematic representations of Daniel, are the declarations of the apostle John, in the Book of his Revelations (chap. i. ver. 7.) “Behold HE COMETH with clouds, and every eye shall SEE him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” This assurance is repeated in chap. xi. 15 to 18th verses. “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for

ever and ever. And the four-and-twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged; and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."

The manifestation of this kingly power and glory of Christ is again described in chap. xix. 11th to 16th verses. "*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself: and he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called THE WORD OF GOD. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean; and out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierce-*

ness and wrath of Almighty God: and he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

The blood upon his vesture, let it here be remarked, is not his *own* blood, but that of his impenitent foes, now united to oppose his authority and his reign. The blood issues not as once from "Emmanuel's veins," but from the winepress of Almighty wrath. The dreadful vintage is come, and the winepress flows with blood. I cannot but here beg the reader to connect with this prophecy of John, that remarkable declaration of Isaiah, (ch. lxiii. 1—4.) "*Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel; travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.*" In this delineation we mark the solemnity of a terrible justice. It is no longer the meek manifestation of the slain Lamb inviting sinners

to believe and live, but the fearful manifestation of retributive justice exacting its full demand. It is the *wrath* of the Lamb—the recoil of abused patience, and the reaction of insulted mercy. But do we inquire the result of this glorious manifestation to the faithful servants of the Redeemer? We are told by the apostle John, (Rev. xx. end of 4th verse,) “*they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*”

I find a striking comment upon this apocalyptic vision in the work of the writer already quoted. “‘Our Lord comes with the splendour of Him to whom all power was given in heaven and earth.’ He had three names. The first is one ‘that no man knew,’ a name beyond human conception, his *heavenly* name. The second, ‘The WORD OF GOD,’ his name as the Mediator, his *scriptural* name. The third, ‘King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,’ his name as the conqueror of the idolatrous religion, and sovereign of the world, his *earthly* name.”—*Croly*, p. 272.

It is, however, due to candour and to truth, to refer at this point of our statement to an assertion made by our Saviour, which may appear to be altogether contradictory to the character of his kingdom which I have hitherto endeavoured to depict. This statement occurs

in the 17th chapter of St. Luke's gospel, 20th verse. "*And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come,* he answered them and said, *the kingdom of God cometh not with observation:* Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for behold, *the kingdom of God is within you.*" The language of this reply, if separated from the context, and if unconnected with other delineations of the same subject, I fully admit, would be conclusive as to the reign of Christ. It would mark out that reign to be exclusively *spiritual.* It would lead our view to the influence of *principles.* It would place the throne of Christ altogether in the hearts of his disciples. But if I mistake not, *the succeeding context,* and the *object* which our Saviour contemplated in this answer to the Pharisees, will place the subject in a very different light, and yield a representation which will be found to harmonize entirely with his *visible* and *personal* reign.

Let us follow the text in the 22nd verse. "*And he said unto the disciples, The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you see here; or see there; go not after them nor follow them.* For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under

heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall the Son of Man be in his day. *But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage until the day that Noe entered into the ark: and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded: But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."*

Let it here be remarked that all these declarations are made not to the *Pharisees* but to the *Disciples*; and that they, in fact, refer to a different subject to that to which he had called the attention of the Pharisees. The answer which he had made to the Pharisees was dictated by that wisdom, which ever knew how to time with infinite skill both counsel, reply, and warning. I request the particular attention of the reader, not only to the import of the words which we have quoted, but to this *distinction of the persons* to whom they were addressed. In the 20th verse, the Pharisees asked at what time the kingdom of God should

come, and to them he answered, that “it came not with observation.” But in the 22nd verse, it is added, “and he said to the *Disciples*, the days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and shall not see it.” The Pharisees were *not present* at this conversation. An interval is observable between the verses. The Pharisees had received their answer; and at this time separated from them, the Disciples renewed the subject with their blessed Master. Their *subsequent* conversation with him will completely explain his *previous* answer to the Pharisees.

But, in the first place, let us enquire into the nature of the *question* which the Pharisees addressed to Christ? What object had they in view? And what did they understand by the term, “the kingdom of God?” Their object was this. The Jews at this time had completely misplaced the dates, and misunderstood the meaning of their prophets. They understood the Messiah’s reign to be as secular in *its* principles, as splendid in its external character; and in both to be connected exclusively with their national and political distinction. They were now enslaved to a foreign yoke, and they anticipated the arrival of their Messiah to break this yoke asunder, and once more to lead them back to victory and success; to the attainment

of every object dear to an earthly policy, and attractive to a selfish ambition. Hence when Jesus Christ came in the lowly garb of poverty and meekness, connecting every miracle not with aggrandizement but with mercy ; exhibiting power, not to augment his own emoluments, but to relieve the wants of others ; laying no stress upon national distinction, but putting forth the claims of God to the obedience and affections of the heart—they were soon disgusted with his purity, and discontented with the evidence on which he rested his high commission. Having no conviction of spiritual evil, they had no desire for a spiritual Saviour—having no love to God, they resisted him who spoke of the allegiance due to God. Selfish, proud, national, avaricious, they expected a Messiah calculated to gratify and to perpetuate these predominant passions. This kingdom of God they greatly desired, and now in a spirit of curiosity they demanded information as to its approach if indeed the mysterious Prophet of Nazareth were able to instruct them. To this question thus made, and in this spirit, how applicable was the reply, “*the kingdom of God cometh not with observation*”—“*the kingdom of God is within you.*” As if he had said, “ the interests which ought to absorb *your* attention are the character and the principles, the spiritual condition of

the subjects who are to live under the government of the Messiah. His dominion is a holy sovereignty, and if he shall rule with external glory, he shall likewise rule with a secret power at once influential and medicinal to the hearts of those who shall share the felicity of that kingdom."

We mark the same holy wisdom in the answer of our Lord to Nicodemus. (John iii. 1.) "*There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The same came to Jesus by night, (being ashamed to come by day,) and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do those miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*" The *miracles*, the *power*, not the *doctrine*, were the great matters of interest at this time to Nicodemus, and he thought it possible that Christ might be the predicted Messiah; and he came by night to converse with him respecting "*the kingdom of God.*" With what affecting solemnity and consummate sagacity did our Lord reply to him! "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" As if he had said, "*Purity, love, faithfulness, and truth are the glory of that kingdom, how then can the selfish, earthly, ambitious heart enter into it? Let it come when it will, except you have a new nature,*

you can never share its triumphs, nor partake its happiness." Precisely with the same object in view, he replied to the worldly-minded Pharisees, "*The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, the kingdom of God is within you.*"

Let us, in the next place, examine the subsequent remarks of our Lord to the Disciples; and we shall perceive, I think, the perfect consistency of this *spiritual* statement with the *visible splendour* of a future kingdom. He tells the disciples (v. 24) that "as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven, *so shall also the Son of Man be in his day.*"

This declaration at once leads to the question, whether the vast range of natural imagery could have furnished an illustration more strikingly significant of the *visible splendour* of the Day of Christ, than the image here selected by our Saviour? Is it possible to pourtray a manifestation of glory more open and palpable than *the brightness of the lightning flash?* The illustration is indeed complete. The state of the world previous to the second Advent is a state, aptly characterised by the darkness of the midnight hour. Open infidelity, secret unbelief, superstition, tyranny, and civil commotion, these mental qualities and these external disasters may well admit the comparison

with night and gloom. But the mighty beam of heaven will break in upon this darkness. The splendour will be sudden, rapid ; spreading along the whole verge of the horizon ; exhibiting a radiance too bright to be mistaken, and producing a conviction too powerful to be resisted. Can there be an object so *attractive of regard*, as the burning stream which the Lightning launches along the midnight sky ? It comes with a direct and overwhelming “ observation.”

In a similar manner the flood came upon the ancient world with *a sudden and terrific manifestation*. The successive waves swept along the plains—the rushing torrents rolled alike over vallies and mountains, and precluded any escape from their fury. And in like manner the flames that encircled Gomorrah were as *apparent as destructive*. Yet these illustrations are employed to pourtray the Second Advent of the Lord. “ *So shall also the Son of man be in his day* ;”—“ his day,” that is, *his own day* ; that day of judgment and of mercy coeval and parallel with “ the thousand years,” during which the Son of man will sway his sceptre over a converted world.

But in what manner, it may be asked, is this kingdom of God at the same time *secret, unobserved, mental, solitary*? Attend to the 25th

verse : “ *But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.*” Many a year of depression and warfare must precede this radiant exhibition of power, strength, and glory. He must be rejected not only of this generation, but, alas ! of many other generations. During *this period* of time, a time commencing when the Saviour entered the manger of Bethlehem, and unfolding its dark events through the ages of persecution and scorn which the militant church would be called to suffer ; during this period his *kingdom* would be *invisible, secret, spiritual.* His subjects would indeed be known to his own eye, and his promises would be fulfilled to their hearts, but like himself, they would be despised and rejected. His dominion would be silent and unobserved, like a calm under-current in the stormy sea of this world’s ambition and crime ! But this preparatory dispensation would *issue* in the awful *manifestation* of his kingdom. The clouds would gather deeper and blacker ; and as the midnight hour advanced, would conceal yet more effectively than before, the few glimmering beams of heaven’s reflected light. But the beacon ray will flash before his church, and then “ *the Sun of Righteousness will arise with everlasting healing in his beams.*” How great then the harmony, and how unbroken the truth in these

apparently jarring testimonies of Christ to the Pharisees and the Disciples! Even they, the disciples, "*would desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and would not see it.*" Theirs would be the day of scorn and of conflict—the day of Satanic influence and of malignant misrule: but they are directed "*in their patience to possess their souls,*" and "*to rejoice in the hope of the coming glory of God.*"

In confirmation of this statement, I would recall to the mind of the reader the words already cited in Matt. xxi. 44, in which passage the Messiah is compared to the foundation stone which God had laid in Zion. "*And whosoever shall fall upon this STONE shall be broken, but on whomsoever IT shall fall it will grind him to powder.*" How evident here the *twofold condition* of this mysterious STONE—its *depressed* and its *exalted* condition. In its *first* condition it lies upon the earth uncomely, unwrought, neglected, unnoticed, save as "*a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence.*" In this state it corresponds with "*the kingdom of God, which cometh not with observation:*" but at length it is elevated—elevated by no human hands. It is raised above the low valley of its humiliation; and being now propelled at once by unerring skill and by irresistible force, it descends to crush every antagonist power. It smites, as we have

seen, the colossal IMAGE, and shivers the giant limbs to dust and ruin. In this state it corresponds with the same kingdom as exhibiting the *Lightning flash of terror and of glory*. Thus entirely do these two representations illustrate and confirm each other.

In connexion with this *twofold condition* of the kingdom of Christ, I would refer the reader to the remark of our divine Lord to Pilate, in John xviii. 36—“ *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now (ννν) is my kingdom not from hence.*” ($\epsilon\nu\tau\epsilon\nu\theta\epsilon\nu$.) Is there not an implied contrast in this remark between his depressed and exalted conditions, as the Son of Man? At that time Satan was “ *the prince of this world,*” and Christ “ *was despised and rejected of men;*” but when Satan shall “ *be cast out,*” then Christ will have the government of the world. In the “ *NEW EARTH, wherein dwelleth righteousness,*” “ *the kingdoms of THIS WORLD*” will have “ *BECOME the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.*” (Rev. xi. 15.) At that time his kingdom will be “ $\epsilon\nu\tau\epsilon\nu\theta\epsilon\nu$.”

I cannot conclude this part of the subject without requesting the attention of the reader to the *extraordinary expectation* of an individual penitent, in reference to this predicted kingdom

of the Messiah; an expectation which inasmuch as it had its source in the direct inspiration of God, is powerfully influential upon the question before us. I refer to the hopes entertained by the dying criminal who was crucified with our Lord. The history is recorded in the 23d chapter of Luke, 38th verse: "*A superscription was also written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ save thyself and us; but the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man has done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."*" This is, in my judgment, the most extraordinary occurrence which the whole Bible presents to our view. I speak not merely of the sudden conversion of character which may be paralleled by the history of the Philippian jailer, and by others, but I speak of that illumination of mind which shed its rays upon the dark and mysterious transaction then passing upon the Cross. I trace here the direct inspiration of the Almighty, and can by no means rest contented with the ordinary interpretation of this event. I entreat the reader to mark the *exact question* which the

dying thief addressed to his Lord, because I think the language that he used has not been *r rigidly* considered. Does not the question of the criminal refer to the *visible kingdom* of Christ hereafter to be reared upon the renovated earth? “Lord remember me when thou COMEST into thy kingdom.” Has this question any reference to the existing moment? Has it any reference to the condition which Christ was about *to assume at the right hand of God?* Has it any reference to consolation in the impending agonies of death, or to any intermediate state of happiness between death and the resurrection? The expression *contains no such ideas.* The words are, “Lord remember me when thou COMEST into thy kingdom.” Forgetful of his present degradation and agony; unoccupied with any region of felicity to which his Lord was advancing through the dreary portals of the grave he *limits his deep solicitude* to that *future hour* in which the mighty Saviour would return to the *earth*; his hope rested upon that return—“when thou *comest*, think of me.” “Soon I shall sleep in the grave; but thou wilt come again, ‘and all that are in the grave shall hear thy voice.’ Oh in that day when thy ‘kingdom shall come, and thy will be done, on Earth as in Heaven,’ deign to remember me!”

Had not such been the import of his prayer, would he not have rather said, “Remember me

now, in that world to which thou *goest*; think of me when thou passest to the regions of felicity in thy Father's presence." But the emphasis of his petition lies upon the word *comest*. To *come*, when used by persons about to depart, is to *return* to the scene *then* present. The expression ever contemplates a revisit to the *existing place* on which they stand. What then is the explanation of this mysterious question? I answer, the *writing over the Cross* was traced by the hand of Pilate, but God had guided its movement. It told a truth which *no man knew in that day, save the thief upon the Cross*—"THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." The eternal Spirit of God surely decyphered this *Superscription*, to the dying criminal. He then regarded the Sufferer before him as the future *King of Israel*. Can we doubt that the "first resurrection" was at this time revealed to him? and that thus instructed he uttered that importunate cry, "Lord remember me when thou *comest* into thy kingdom." "In the day when thou *returnest* to build up *the throne of David*, then remember me; then let me, unworthy as I am, attend thy triumph." How inexplicable must this petition have appeared to the witnesses of the sufferings of Christ? But what answer did the mighty Sufferer return? "Verily I say unto thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." When I recur to the *language*

of the question, to the *actual import* of the words uttered, and to the *reply* received, I cannot but deem *the present punctuation erroneous*, and that the true expression is, “Verily, verily, *I say unto thee this day*, Thou shalt be with me in Paradise.” In this connexion the reply is singularly sublime. “*I say unto thee this day*—at this period of my trial, depression, and death; *I say unto thee this day*; *this day* on which my foes appear to triumph, and Satan to rejoice; *this day*, when I am at once the scoff of the infidel, and the butt of the slanderer, *I say unto thee this day of my utter abandonment, Thou shalt be with me in Paradise*. When I shall return, as thou justly expectest me to return; when I shall return, not as the slain Lamb, but as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, thou shalt stand in my presence: thy faith shall not be disappointed: I will know thee again, and thou shalt recognize thy Lord. In the glory of my kingdom thou shalt realize the extent of that grace which can triumph over ingratitude, and rebellion, and shame; and can transform a dying criminal into a ransomed, immortal, and glorious servant of God.”*

MYSTERIOUS SUFFERER! Oh, in that kingdom remember him who writes, and those who shall read these words!

* Vide Appendix A.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REIGN OF THE GLORIFIED SAINTS.

HAVING placed before the notice of the Christian reader some of those passages of scripture which appear to me to bear most directly upon the *personal* reign of Christ on Earth, I come now to examine the records of scripture upon a point closely connected with it, the *association of the chosen saints of God* with the glory and power of that kingdom. The two subjects are so interwoven, whether in emblems or in express assurances, that they cannot fairly be separated ; and whatever be the character of Christ's kingdom, that must be the character of the kingdom of the Saints. If his kingdom be *exclusively spiritual*, then must *their dominion* be the *dominion of their principles* ; and *their glory*, the glory of uniting with the vast brother-

hood of the redeemed in the allegiance of the heart to the authority of God. If, on the other hand, the kingdom of Christ be likewise *visible* and *personal*, then must their reign be likewise *visible* and *personal*.

Let us direct our attention, in the first place, to some prophetic intimations selected from the writers of the Old Testament.

The 149th Psalm, v. 5, contains the following words ; “*Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand : to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people.* To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron ; to execute upon them the judgment written. *This honour have all the Saints.*” Again, (Ps. xlix. 14.) “*Like sheep they (that is the wicked), like sheep they are laid in the grave : death shall feed on them. The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning, and their beauty shall consume in the grave, from their dwelling. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave ; for he shall receive me.*”

Let us next refer to the second vision of Daniel, which we have already examined in respect to the kingdom of *Christ*, but which foretells likewise the *dominion* of the righteous.

(Dan. vii. 21.) "*And I beheld, and the same Horn made war with the Saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the SAINTS possessed the kingdom.*" (Ver. 27.) *And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the SAINTS of the most High.*" I have already remarked that the Kingdom of the Son of God, must be of the same kind with the kingdoms subverted; and that consequently this kingdom will be *visible* and *personal*. I here draw a similar inference in reference to the dominion of the Saints. They will surely reign, not through the mere prevalence of *principles*, which they shall *approve*; but by a visible *power* and *glory* which they shall possess.

I beg the reader, in the next place, to recur to the 14th chapter of Zechariah, ver. 5; a passage which we have already considered in its connexion with the kingdom of the Messiah; but it identifies with *his coming, the coming of the saints of God.* (Zech. xiv. 4.) *And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives.* (Ver. 5. at the end.) *And the Lord my God shall come, and all the SAINTS with thee.*"

One other citation shall terminate the passages from the Old Testament. The prophet

Malachi thus writes ; (Mal. iv. 2, 3;) “ *But unto you that fear my name shall the Son of righteousness arise with healing in his wings ; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall TREAD DOWN the wicked ; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.*”

We come now to the consideration of the language of our Lord himself, in reference to the glory of his saints. (Matt. v. 5.) “ *Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the EARTH.*” Matt. xix. 27, 28 ; a passage already quoted with reference to the *throne of Christ*, but which refers also to the *throne of the righteous*. “ *Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold we have forsaken all and followed thee ; what shall we have therefore ? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, IN THE REGENERATION, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*” (Matt. xxiv. 46, 47.) “ *Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him Ruler over all his goods.*” (Matt. xxv. 21.) “ *His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee RULER over many things.*” (Ver. 34.) “ *Then shall*

the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the KINGDOM prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Luke xii. 32.) “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the KINGDOM.” (Luke xix. 17.) “And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou AUTHORITY over ten cities.” (Luke xxii. 29.) “And I appoint unto you a KINGDOM, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Let us next advert to the language of the APOSTLES. I refer, in the first instance, to 1 Cor. vi. 1. “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the Saints? Do ye not know that the SAINTS shall judge the world? and if the WORLD shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge Angels? how much more things that pertain to this life.”

(2 Tim. iv. 1.) “I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his APPEARING and his KINGDOM.” And in reference to his own share in that glorious kingdom, he adds in v. 7, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my

course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a CROWN of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." And, to evince the interest which *all* the saints have in that same kingdom, he adds of this *Crown* to be given to himself; "and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

(Heb. xii. 28.) "Wherefore we receiving a KINGDOM which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." Again, in the Epistle of Jude, (v. 14,) "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, (that is, of impious men,) saying, *Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his Saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds.*" And again, (Rom. xvi. 20,) "The God of peace shall bruise Satan shortly under your feet."

We now come to the yet more emphatic language of the Apocalypse: (Rev. i. 5, 6,) "*Jesus Christ—the PRINCE of the KINGS of the EARTH—who hath made us KINGS and Priests unto God and his Father.*"

(Rev. ii. 26.) "And HE that overcometh and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers."

(Rev. iii. 21.) “*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and sat down in my Father’s throne.*”

(Rev. v. 9.) “*And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God KINGS and PRIESTS, and we shall REIGN on the EARTH.*”

(Rev. xx. 4.) “*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls (the lives or persons) of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God; and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads; and they lived and REIGNED with CHRIST a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the FIRST resurrection. Blessed and holy is HE that hath part in the first resurrection; on him the second death hath no power, but they shall be Priests unto God, and shall REIGN with him a thousand years.*”

That this FIRST resurrection is a *literal* resurrection will, I think, scarcely admit a question. The “*beheading*” was literal, the reanimation must be literal. The revival of a martyr’s zeal at this time could not besides be called a *first*

resurrection. Such a zeal had revived in *many* periods of time. With what emphasis had this zeal revived in the days of the Reformation !

That these various passages of scripture delineate the *future condition* of the Saints of God under images of *authority* and *power*, there can be, surely, no difference of opinion. The terms are not simply descriptive of *honour* and *glory*; but of *power* and of *authority*. Their kingly reign with Christ is associated with “*a rod of iron*”—with the punishment of foes—with the *adjudication of characters*. “*Can ye not judge worldly matters?* for know ye not that the *saints shall judge the world?*” The twelve apostles are to be seated on *thrones*, *judging the twelve tribes*: and the great apostle to the Gentiles expected a *crown* in the same great day; and expected that crown likewise for all who *love the appearing of Christ*.

This statement, thus far, no pious man will wish to gainsay. But a difference of opinion exists in the *interpretation* of these expressions. It is a *spiritual power* and *authority* and *glory*. The foes are *earthly passions*, the crown is a *heavenly crown*; the priestly *offering* is a *spiritual sacrifice*. This is the received opinion of the pious. But can these expressions be thus limited? Can this be other than a *real authority*, a *local sovereignty*, a *visible kingdom*, over which “*the*

righteous shall have domination in that morning," when the great and eternal Luminary shall rise upon the world "*with healing in his beams?*" Are the foes to be put down merely spiritual foes—the lusts and passions of the flesh? These the believer crucifies through the Lamb, ere he puts off mortality. Can the *crown* be merely spiritual? Is it not the same crown which shall adorn the Saviour's head? "*To him that overcometh will I give to sit down upon my throne.*" "*They shall REIGN with Christ.*"

But who are these SAINTS of God? Is there a definite number? Is there a distinctive character by which they may be known? It appears to me to be no idle speculation, no presumption, no rash affirmation, to assert the existence of this number, and the certainty of this distinctive character, by which they are marked out. These saints of God are surely the ELECT CHURCH of Jew and Gentile, the BRIDE of the LAMB, the property of God, when "*He makes up his jewels;*" those "*chosen in Christ Jesus from before the foundation of the world,*" to be the partners of Emmanuel's throne; to be "*joint heirs with him*" of the kingdom; even of that kingdom which is to rise out of the ruins of those monarchies which shall so awfully have abused their delegated authority. These monarchies, when smitten by the mysterious

STONE, are at the same moment given up to the SAINTS, no longer to be worn down by persecution and scorn! These Saints are the Elect children of God, from the days of Adam to those of the second advent; the children of "the first resurrection." They are composed partly of the dead who have slept in Jesus, now awakened to immortal life, with bodies fashioned after the model of the body of Christ; and partly of those living at the time of his advent. These Saints, thus united, will be caught up to meet him in the air, in order to descend with him, to the destruction of his foes, and to the establishment of the earth in righteousness and peace.

The language of scripture as to "the first resurrection" of the servants of God, in order to share the millennial throne of the Messiah, I deem to be even detailed and precise. I ask for a candid scrutiny into those well known assurances of the apostle Paul, in the 15th Chap. of the 1st. Epistle to the Corinthians; assurances which to us have long been consecrated by all the fondest sympathies of our bereaved nature; assurances whose accents still fall upon the ear, even as the sabbath melodies of heaven, when the silent mourners are gathered around the grave!

I ask whether a single intimation find a place

among those assurances, of any resurrection of the *unjust* at that momentous era? I ask whether the whole passage be not a prophetic history of the reanimation to life and glory, of those, and of *those alone*, who have gotten “*the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Let us inspect accurately the language of the apostle. (1 Cor. xv. 42.) “*So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.*” (Ver. 50.) “*Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (for the trumpet shall sound,) and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Let this sublime announcement of the Apostle be precisely scrutinized. Is not the imagery altogether that of splendour, joy, and triumph? Are not the persons at this time restored to life, the victorious saints, to whom death had lost its sting, and at whose reanimation, the grave had resigned "its victory?" Is the joyful sound mingled in that hour with one sigh of attendant remorse or shame? Are the *wicked* in any manner spectators of this most glorious event? No: we answer, in the language already cited from the Apocalypse, "*the Saints lived and reigned with Christ; but the rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years were passed.*" And if we turn to the 22d verse of this same 15th chapter of the Epistle to the Corinthians, we find a remarkable assertion corroborative of *the two distinct eras* of resurrection. "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming; then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father.*" Are not *three distinct events* here foretold? 1. The resurrection of Christ, the first fruits. 2. *Afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming.* 3. *Then the end?* Between the *first* and *second* events, eighteen centuries have already rolled away: and be-

tween the *second* and the *third* event, will intervene the period of the millennial day, whatever may be the number of years comprised within its duration.

This *second* event, the *coming of Christ with the saints of the first resurrection*, is the event delineated by the apostle, in the language which we have just cited. This event is also the same glorious Epiphany foretold by Zechariah, in the words already quoted; “*and the Lord my God shall come, and all the SAINTS with thee!*” This is the grand event which is to usher in the day of the glory of the redeemed church, and the day of the world’s true joy, when, under the sway of Christ and the ransomed saints, “*the knowledge of God shall at length cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.*”

In reference to this KINGLY power of the Saviour and the risen Saints, I would beg the attention of the reader to the remarkable expression of the apostle, (1 Cor. xv. 50.) “*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*” If the “*kingdom of God*” be allowed to be *co-eval* with the Millennium, and if “*flesh and blood cannot inherit this kingdom,*” then the millennial reign cannot be a reign of mere principles; for the term “*flesh and blood*” cannot be used in opposition to *principles*. Had the term been “*flesh*” simply, it might

have been understood as in opposition to the *Spirit*, and in that case the kingdom in question might be spiritual; but the addition of the term “blood” surely binds down the interpretation to the *mortal* condition of man, and gives a reason for the force of the apostle’s declaration, “that we shall all be *changed*;” that both the *risen dead*, and the *existing living* must alike be fashioned after the spiritual or glorious model of Christ’s body; because that a *mortal* man is incapable of the glory of the *immortal kingdom of God*.

That the resurrection of the Saints is distinct from, and prior to, that of the wicked, is equally apparent from another declaration of the apostle Paul, which occurs in 1 Thes. iv. 13. “*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep; that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (or come before) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up*

together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

In this account of the resurrection of the saints, in which no single expression, properly figurative, is mingled; not even the slightest allusion is made to the reanimation of the *unjust*. A sudden transition of the *righteous* takes place: the sleeping dead are raised; and the living saints, upon the awaking of their kindred dead, are changed; and both are caught up to meet the descending Saviour. The tears of separation are dried up in this glorious meeting, and they abide for ever in the presence of him they love. Is this picture of events in any respect like that of a great assize of the *just* and *unjust*, previous to the world's annihilation? Is it not rather the representation of the union of the saints with Christ? "the marriage of the Lamb," when the elect "*Bride hath made herself ready*," and is presented to him "*without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing?*" And is not this statement perfectly accordant with that of the apostle, already noticed, to the Corinthians? and does it not describe, even minutely, the very manner in which the Redeemer will at length manifest himself to the world? He is coming to REIGN; but his Saints, who have "*suffered with him*," "*are to be glorified*" also

with him; and in this exact order are they raised to partake his triumph. For *then* will commence his kingdom, and then will his Saints appear to be Assessors with him in his judgments, both of mercy and of punishment to the world.

These assurances of the apostle are strikingly confirmed by the lips of the Lord himself. When adverting to this infinitely awful subject, in Matt. xxiv. 29, he thus revealed the future to the disciples : “ *Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the power of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven ; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn. And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.* ” And now let us mark the coincidence of these facts with those detailed by the apostle. “ *And he shall send his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.* ” Can words more plainly confirm the expectation of the apostle ? The mighty messengers of grace, like the vivid lightning, will dart along the surface of the earth, in search both of the dead and the living. They have received the wondrous commission

to assemble the Elect of God, in order to meet the Saviour as *he* advances to the earth. In obedience to the high mandate, they spread to the four winds of heaven.—They waken the dead—they summon the living—they convoy the chosen throng, now met in “sweet surprise,” to the glorious presence of their common Lord and immutable Friend! This record is from the lips of Christ, and it cannot mislead us. It will sustain every expectation we may build upon its truth. “*This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*”

This “first resurrection” of the righteous, appears to explain the energy with which the apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians, refers to the subject : “*If that by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*” A spiritual resurrection he had already received. He knew well that he was “*quickened, when dead in his trespasses and sins.*” On the point of the general resurrection, if there were no other, he could have no doubt: to this all must arise ; but if there be a first revival, the peculiar honour of the righteous, then it is natural he should say, “*He had not already attained ;*” and that the glorious prospect should fill his soul with zeal and solicitude ! The expression he uses suggests likewise this idea. The ordinary Greek word to denote the resurrec-

tion is, *αναστασις*. but it is remarkable that he here uses the word *εξαναστασις*, “a resurrection from *amongst* the dead,” (Phil. iii. 11.) implying that many would yet continue dead. “The rest of the dead *lived not* till the thousand years were finished.” (Rev. xx. 5.) This is accordant with the statement of the same apostle, (1 Cor. xv. 23.) that “*every one* shall rise in his own order ;” *εν τω ιδιω ταγματι*, in his proper band ; for *ταγμα* signifies a cohort or legion. (*Macknight, in loc.*)

It may also be here observed that in Luke xx. 35, our blessed Lord, in his answer to the Saducees, uses an expression of similar import. He says, “*They that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, (or age, του αιωνος εκεινου) και της αναστασεως της εκ νεκρων, shall neither marry nor be given in marriage:*” words which plainly *limit* the number of persons *then* to arise. Those who arise are not *generally* the dead, but some *εκ νεκρων*, *from amongst* the dead.

And now let me venture to ask, is not this consummation of blessedness to the elect, an event entirely consistent with every expectation which we can reasonably form, from the connexion established between Jesus Christ, as “the second Adam,” and his redeemed saints ?

What, I would gratefully inquire, what may we not anticipate from words like those once

addressed to his disciples ? (John xiv. 1 ;) “ *Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions ; if it were not so, I would have told you : I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. Verily, verily I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice : and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come ; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereh no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now, therefore, have sorrow ; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. In the world ye shall have tribulation ; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*” Or what may we not anticipate from words like those addressed by Jesus to his Almighty Father, in behalf of his chosen. (John xvii. 1.) “ *Father, the hour is come ; glorify thy Son. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me ; for they are thine. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Neither pray I for these alone ; but for*

them also which shall believe on me through their word. That they all may be one, as thou, Father; art in me, and I in thee : that they also may be one in us. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me.”

Can any expectations be too elevated, which we build upon a foundation of this eternal strength and solidity ? Ought it to surprise us if, in this confidence, the early saints “*took joyfully the spoiling of their earthly goods, knowing they had in heaven a better and more enduring substance?*” Ought it to surprise us, if, believing that “*nothing could separate them from the love of Christ ;*” if satisfied that “*neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature,*” should be able to effectuate such a separation ; if persuaded that “*all things were their’s ; the world, and life, and death, and things present, and things to come ; all were their’s, and they were Christ’s, and Christ was God’s:*” if persuaded that at the blissful morning “*of the first resurrection*” they should behold Emmanuel’s glory, and with him “*judge the world in righteousness ;*” oh ! can we wonder that they absolutely “*groaned within them-*

*selves," "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body;" in the day of "the manifestation of the Sons of God?" When they marked the cruelties, the oppression, the crimes, and the tears of mankind. Oh! can we wonder that they "*looked, and even hastened, to the coming of the day of God?*" in which day they knew the disordered world would assume a new aspect, and the promises of God arise to their full and glorious accomplishment? Truly this hope it was which cheered their hours of gloom, and nerved afresh their wearied hearts! At that time "*truth was indeed fallen in the earth;*" for its sacred Author had not in that earth "*where to rest his head.*" Idolatry and superstition, false philosophy and grossest ignorance held the sceptre; and amidst such misrule the apostles had little to expect, save reproach, and scorn, and death. But they looked forward to the hour, bright to the eye of faith, when "*truth shall again flourish out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven.*" They anticipated the hour when, under the agency of eternal love, they should become yet more munificent benefactors to a ruined race, than in the best days of their earthly ministry they had ever been! They hailed the hour, when the Lord would unite them in glory for ever to himself, and consign*

in a great measure to their guidance and control, some happier regions of a renovated world! “*We shall reign on the earth!*” O well then might they exclaim, “*Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, unto him be glory, and honour, and blessing, and praise from henceforth, even for ever!*”

Having thus considered the general subject of the Kingdom of Christ and his Glorified Church, I propose to inquire into some few particulars as to its *nature* and *effects*, so far as they are recorded on the page of scripture. Now, indeed, “*we see as through a glass, darkly;*” and “*it doth not yet appear what we shall be;*” but that which even this dim glass permits us to discern, is exceedingly bright and glorious; and it were competent to us, had we faith to receive it, to imitate the *wise men* in their journey to Bethlehem, who, “*when they saw the star which stood over where the young child was,*” while yet they saw not *HIM*, “*rejoiced with an exceeding great joy!*” Such a light at least have we, “*whereunto we shall do well to take heed.*” This light may indeed be “*a lamp to our feet*” as we advance along the pathways of this wilderness world, until “*the day dawn, and the day-star itself arise in our hearts.*”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REIGN OF THE GLORIFIED SAINTS.

BEFORE we proceed to the more particular examination of the nature of the Kingdom of Christ and his saints, we may observe that the existence of such a kingdom throws great light upon several obscure intimations made to *individuals* in the Book of God. Of these, besides the dominion of the earth promised to Adam, which we have considered at large, we may notice the inheritance (Gen. xiii. 14) of Canaan promised to Abraham.

To Abraham the Lord gave the whole land, which he discovered around him, for a possession; and by "*faith*," we are told, (Heb. xi. 8,) "*He sojourned in the land of promise, which he was after to RECEIVE for an INHERITANCE:*" but has he ever possessed it *otherwise* than by

faith? The promise to him yet lies *unfulfilled* upon the sacred page.

Again, the assurance made to Daniel (chap. xii. 13) merits consideration: “*Go thy way, Daniel, till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot in the end of the days.*” “The end of the days” is surely *the end of the fourth monarchy*, at which era the people of Israel will be restored to their own land; and at this same time it is promised to Daniel “*to stand in his lot.*” A similar intimation we find in the 99th Psalm. This Psalm commences with the expression, “*The Lord reigneth:*” this expression fixes the chronology of the declaration. It is added, (ver. 5,) “*Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool, for he is holy.*” Then mark the words that follow: “*Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the Lord, and he answered them.*” Their former intercourse with God is now to be renewed in that day of the Lord when the throne of David shall be rebuilt. Bishop Horsley, in his Comment on this Psalm, has this expression: “In the 99th Psalm, Jehovah seated between the cherubim in Zion, (the visible church,) reigns over all the world, in order to be praised for the justice of his government.” “This Psalm,” he adds, “this Psalm, I think, alludes to a reign of

Jehovah in Zion subsequent to the restoration of the Jewish nation, when Moses, Aaron, and Samuel are to bear a part in the general worship." (Horsley in loc.)

Now the first resurrection of the saints, and the kingdom placed in their hands, subordinately to the power of Christ—these facts, whenever they are realized, will at once accomplish the promises here made to Abraham and to Daniel.

The kingdom of the “*first resurrection*” is indeed a clue to many difficult passages of scripture, and may recall, in this place, to the recollection of the reader, the assurance to Nathanael and Philip (John i.) “*Hereafter shall ye see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man;*” and likewise the promise to the twelve apostles in particular, “*that they should sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israél.*”

Let us now attempt to elucidate, as far as the light of scripture will carry us, the *nature* of the Kingdom of Christ, and of his saints upon the earth. For this purpose, in the first place, let us advert to the *state of the world at large, as it will appear after the second advent of our Lord.*

The infidel and apostate factions, connected more especially with the broken state of the

last, or Roman Empire, will be dispersed and annihilated by the visible judgments of the Lamb of God, when "*He comes with his ten thousand saints,*" in whose hands is the sceptre of iron, to avenge the Lord's cause. This demolition of the mystic Babylon comprises not only the ensanguined papacy, long "*drunk with the blood of the saints,*" but the secular system of carnal protestantism, and the open coalition of deism and infidelity: all these anti-christian confederacies will be swept away (Rev. xvi. 17—19.) The Jews at this time will be converted amidst much trouble and slaughter, and will be brought back to their own land.

(Zech. xiv.) (Dan. xii. 1.) Idolatry and superstition will gradually terminate, and the nations which are at present in heathen darkness, will be prepared to welcome the light of the gospel. (Isaiah ii. 11. 25.) At the same time a remnant of the nations, connected with the apostacies of ancient Christendom, (Zech. xiii. 8, 9,) will be converted; and thus, after the final pouring out of the phials of wrath upon the earth, the inhabitants, which will remain to constitute the *subjects* of the Redeemer's Kingdom, will be composed of the existing *Pagan nations then converted to Christianity*; *the restored Jews*; and *the remnant* of the apostate countries of Christen-

dom, reserved *for repentance and faith*. Over these nations the dominion of Christ and his saints will be extended.

What physical change the earth, with its climates and fruitfulness, may undergo at this time, it is not for us to assert; but I think it plain, from various passages of scripture, that a great amelioration of the original curse will take place, and that the joy of the earth will be great, because "*the Lord reigneth*;" and because his saints, the excellent of the earth, will be the "*princes*" and rulers in his kingdom. The curse will not, however, be wholly removed from the earth at this time, inasmuch as its inhabitants will still be mortal; and, though living in peace and prosperity, will still pass to the dust of the grave, until the general resurrection at the final period of the Messiah's Kingdom.

This Kingdom will be different in its character from every other manifestation of power and authority ever exhibited upon the earth. The "*latter rains of the Spirit*" descending upon the inhabitants, they will become fruitful in good works. Satan, through whose instrumentality their bad passions have been fomented and excited, with all his hosts of malignant angels, will be driven from the earth. He will no longer be its prince; idolatry will

wholly cease, and power will become as the image of God, a sacred energy used to promote the best interests of truth, integrity, happiness, and concord. The subordinate governments will be Christian, and the sceptres will be swayed in righteousness. Upon this part of my subject I beg to quote a passage from a living author, with which, although the writer does not hold my own interpretation of the personal reign of Christ, I gratefully express my entire concurrence; a passage which depicts, in a very striking manner, the condition of the world at this its millennial period.

" Of the universal diffusion," this author observes—" of the universal diffusion and establishment of Christianity, the most satisfactory assurances are given us. ' The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.' (Isa. xi. 9.) ' Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' ' All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.' (Ps. ii. 8., and xxii. 17.) ' The Lord will famish all the gods of the earth, and men shall worship him every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen.' (Zeph. ii. 11.) ' From the rising of the sun even unto the going down

of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles ; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a peace offering ; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.' (Mal. i. 11.)

" Though we see no reason to infer that in that renovated state of things, when the Holy Spirit shall have judged, and cast out, and bound with a great chain the prince of this world ; when Christianity shall be universally triumphant ; when the kingdom and the dominion under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the Most High ; and when they shall sit on thrones, and reign with Christ ; though we see no reason to infer that civil governments will be abolished, or that a community of goods will be established ; or that men, merely because they are pious, will fill all places of power and trust, for such changes would convert the Kingdom of Christ into a worldly association, and seem to be inconsistent with the continued existence of the civil relations, rights, and properties of mankind ; yet we are fully warranted to conclude that the great majority everywhere will be genuine converts to the Gospel, and that Christian principle will exercise a dominant influence over the tempers of mankind, and will regulate their mutual intercourse ; the result of which will be—purity, peace, union,

and the subordination of all secular pursuits and interests to the glory of Christ.

“ As scriptural Christianity will be universally diffused and professed, and by far the greater part will be subjects of its vital power, is it reasonable to suppose that the Spirit of Jesus will give this glorious ascendancy to the Gospel, without bringing multitudes under its *saving* influence ? or that knowledge, purity, and goodness could form the general character of the church in this blessed period, unless the great proportion of her members were true believers ? I might ask, was there ever a great revival of the visible interests of Christ in times past, without a plentiful diffusion of the Spirit, and a numerous accession of genuine converts ? How much more in that age, when Satan shall be bound—the age in which God is to give a specimen to the universe of the blessed influence of his Gospel on the character and condition of mankind in the present state ? Then ‘ the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold as the light of seven days.’ ‘ The Lord will turn to the people a pure language,’ that they may all call on the name of the Lord, and serve him with one consent; the waters of evangelical truth, impregnated with the animating and healing influences of the Holy Spirit,

which issue from under the threshold of the temple, shall impart life whithersoever they come.

“ Christian principle will now exercise a dominant influence over the tempers of mankind, and regulate their intercourse. Let us suppose that the Gospel is preached with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, in a region where it never has been known, or where all that remains of it is some of its forms, whose meaning and references are lost; and that the great majority of the inhabitants become true converts, eager to press forward towards the highest attainments in Christian knowledge, experience, and practice. How great and obvious would be the blessed change in the tempers and manners of the people! How many evils, which had been considered as scarcely partaking of the nature of sin, which even had been eulogized, would be renounced, and proscribed, and consigned to infamy? Pride and covetousness, and the love of pleasure, and other noxious passions being subdued in the hearts of many; and humility, and love, and meekness, and other holy affections being implanted and cherished, would not Christian principle, in opposition to a worldly spirit in all its forms, gain the ascendancy, and give a tone to society in that region of the earth?

would not even those who should remain ignorant of the Gospel, and hostile to its spirit, yet seem to submit to it, and respect its prescriptions, feeling themselves constrained to act thus, if they would not oppose themselves to the current of public sentiment, nor incur general condemnation ?

“ We have seen all this exemplified in small districts where the gospel has been blessed with great success : though in that future period, when the Holy Spirit shall have convinced the world of judgment, by judging Satan, and casting him into the bottomless pit, all will not be genuine believers ; yet as Christianity will be the only religion of mankind, and as multitudes everywhere will experience its vital power, it is reasonable to expect that the spirit of its doctrines and institutions, reigning in so many hearts, will shed a purifying and exalting influence on society in general, and predominate in all the intercourse of mankind ?

“ Will not the demolition of the strong holds of sin, in the great majority of mankind, prevent those inroads which pride and covetousness and ambition have been continually making on human virtue and happiness ? Will not the general inhabitation of evangelical truth purify and soften and expand the heart ; in-

vesting the human character with the passive graces which teach us to bear evil with patience and meekness ; and with the active charities, which excite us to do good to all as we have opportunity ? How much vice and misery will then be expelled, and their recurrence prevented ; and how varied and vast the accessions to excellence and comfort ! Then ‘ when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea ; the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them : they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.’ Isaiah xi. 6—9.

“ The general feeling too must be strongly on the side of piety and goodness. The fruits of the Spirit will be honoured and commended, while the works of the flesh will receive the contempt which they deserve. Things shall no longer be *called* by *false* names which throw a varnish over the deformities of error and vice, and subject those who live godlily to reproach and shame. Homage will no more be given to the opulent who are worthless, nor success in executing the plans of ambition and avarice be regarded as sanctifying these antichristian passions ; the vile person shall no more be *called*

liberal, nor the church *said* to be bountiful. The duellist, instead of being celebrated as a man of honour, will be denounced as a murderer; and the conquerors, who have overrun the fairest portions of our globe with fire and sword, and have subjugated the nations to their will, instead of being held up to the admiration of the human race, will be execrated as the deadliest foes of their kind: the dishonest gain of merchandise, which are now regarded only as the fruits of dexterous management, or of ingenious industry, will be classed with the acquisitions of the thief and the robber; the faithful and patient contendings of the saints and servants of Christ in former ages against the corruptions of the church and the world, which in the days of general degeneracy had been derided and reproached, will receive their merited commendation—will be remembered with gratitude, and proposed for imitation. The venerable and holy men who from age to age opposed antichristian superstition and usurpation—who preached, and laboured, and suffered in defence of the gospel; who amidst scorn, and tortures, and death followed the Lamb; to whose efforts in holding forth the word of life, and in standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had set them free, the church and the world are so much indebted, but whose names

and labours have been traduced and loaded with infamy by many an infidel or time-serving pen : these will be rescued from this disgrace, and be crowned with high and deserved honours ; while mankind shall accord in consigning their persecutors and calumniators, whatever may have been their worldly dignities or their literary fame, to an eternal oblivion.

“ The influence of this triumphant state of the religion of Jesus on the civil government of the world, will be unspeakably beneficial. Not without pointed reference to what has been the actual character of governments hitherto, in almost every country, has the prophetic scripture described them as beasts of prey. The four great monarchies were presented to Daniel under the image of four ravenous beasts, each fiercer and more cruel than its predecessor. And how has power, in times past, been *generally*, I do not say *universally*, employed ? In satiating the pride or the ambition, the covetousness or the sensual passions of those who possessed it—regardless of the rights and the happiness of the millions whom they governed ; and indeed the mass of mankind, have been so sunk in ignorance, and so much the slaves of the same vicious passions, as to lend themselves the willing instruments of perpetrating every crime. The great support of any govern-

ment is public opinion ; and if the community be corrupt, how can the government be pure ? But when the doctrines of the gospel shall be universally diffused and professed, and Christian principle shall gain a decisive ascendancy, and regulate public opinion and human intercourse, civil government will be exercised exclusively for its legitimate ends, and teem with benefits to mankind : piety and purity and goodness will receive public encouragement, and iniquity in all its forms will be discountenanced and put to shame : the love of truth, of justice, and of peace will pervade communities, and will actuate governments both in their domestic administration, and in their international intercourse. Then also war with all its unnumbered calamities will cease, and peace will universally prevail—a state devoutly to be wished, but which we cannot expect ‘ till the prince of this world be cast out ;’ till the elements of war in the human heart be subdued ; and the extension and success of the gospel alone can insure that result—‘ For every battle of the warrior, and the garment stained with blood, shall be for burning, fuel for the fire.’ (Isa. ix. 5.) ‘ He shall judge among the nations, and rebuke many people ; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks : nation shall not lift up

sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.' (Isa. ii. 4.)

"We may further notice that another leading result of the general diffusion and success of the gospel, will be *union among its professors*. We must here decline, however, even a rapid and general view of the divided state of the church; of the leading causes of that sinful state; of the evils which arise from it; of the good which God educes from it; of the obstructions to union, and the means by which it may be ultimately effected; and can only refer to some passages of scripture as the foundation for our faith and hope that the divisions of Zion will be healed, and that unity of belief and profession, in so far as is necessary for consistent fellowship in all the ordinances of the gospel, and brotherly love, will reign through the widely extended kingdom of the Lord Jesus. 'They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain:' 'The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah be cut off. Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.' (Isa. xi. 9, 13.) 'For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent: (Zeph. iii. 9;) and the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and

his name one,' (Zech. xiv. 9,) one great and glorious society, enjoying the same privileges, exhibiting the same faith, and co-operating for the same ends."*

This brief but luminous delineation of the prevalence of religion, powerfully depicts the condition of mankind during the millennial period. The view which I entertain of the INFLUENCE which will form and sustain the allegiance of this kingdom, would lead me indeed to adopt yet stronger expressions, and to expect not only that *the large majority of mankind* will be genuine converts to the gospel, but that during a very long period the number of *merely nominal converts* will be *exceedingly small*. The allegiance of the world will be sincere, affectionate, consistent.

Whether this change will take place with a very extraordinary rapidity—a rapidity manifestly miraculous, or with a rapidity suited to a more usual influence of divine grace, more than one opinion may perhaps be entertained. I am disposed to think that the change will be wrought with a miraculous rapidity, of which the day of Pentecost may afford an illustration.

That the restored Jews are to be greatly instrumental in producing this change, I can

* Vide Stark's Sermons, p. 366, a truly valuable volume, though now out of print.

cherish no doubt; for they are to be “as a dew spread over the earth;” and “the receiving of them back into their own land, will be to the world” as life from the dead. But this use of external and usual instruments will not, I imagine, be *unaccompanied* by the direct renewal of miraculous agency. *Such* will be the condition of the world subsequent to the second advent of the Messiah; a period of faith and holiness, which is characterised by the prophet Isaiah as constituting “a new heaven and a new earth.”

This hallowed and renovated state of the earth is the theme of hope and joy to every true believer in the revelation of God; and, to the view which I have hitherto given of that state, no such believer, I imagine, will be reluctant to yield his full assent: but many will, perhaps, differ from the view which I must now proceed to illustrate, as to the *government* of that world. I have briefly explained the condition of those who are to be the *subjects*, the *governed* of the kingdom; men in their mortal state, but now penitent, converted, humble, affectionate, pious to God, and charitable to their kindred and their neighbour; men temperate, consistent, prosperous without pride, and happy without ingratitude; men still associated in civil order and government, living

without injustice, and dying without alarm ; forming a pleasant and a joyous family, united in bonds which the faith of Christ and the Spirit of truth have formed and consecrated ; men, to whom self-control, virtue, kindness, and public and private concord will mitigate disease, and much diminish sorrow ; men, to whom life will be felicity, and death full of peace ; men, in fine, realizing that lovely and soul-rejoicing scene, depicted by the skilful hand of the evangelic prophet : (Isaiah lxv. 17.)

“Behold I create new heavens and a new earth ; and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create ; for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people ; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days : for the child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses and inhabit them ; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit ; they shall not plant, and another eat : for as the days of a tree, are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour.

in vain; nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt; nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."

Such is the condition of the *governed*, the happy subjects of the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of his glorified saints. To the method of this *government* I shall next solicit the attention of the Christian reader. I have already offered a very decided opinion as to the *personal reign of Christ*; and I have hinted at the *return of miraculous agency into the world*. I have intimated that while I refer the happiness and the purity of this kingdom to an **INWARD INFLUENCE**, to the powerful agency of the secret and eternal Teacher, the great Comforter; and while I hold, with other interpreters, the effective conversion of the human character to be, not by the might of miracle, but by "the Spirit of the Lord;" yet I gather beyond this, from the language of scripture, that this casting out of Satan will be effected, and this wise and harmonious fabric of social order and of religious happiness will be reared, under the *visible* do-

minion of the glorified Messiah and his elect church. I gather, that the sovereignties and authorities of the earth will recognise and delight in the visitations, counsels, and favour of the redeemed princes of the earth, and hold their own authority beneath *their* acknowledged sceptre ; and that thus the government of the world, in its daily and peaceful course, will be under a *miraculous dispensation*, and the kingdom be established in the hands of him, who will “personally reign as KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS.”

It is with humility, and an anxious desire to abide entirely by the word of God, that I now state this opinion, and shall proceed to explain it, as far as the light that shines upon the sacred page will enable me to discern its wondrous import.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GOVERNMENT OF CHRIST AND HIS SAINTS.

THE Prophet Isaiah has recorded (Isaiah xxiv. 23) this remarkable declaration : “ *Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall REIGN in Mount Zion, and before his ancients gloriously.*”

Upon this passage a pious and learned commentator has made the following observations : “ This is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts or Armies, of the sun, moon, and stars, the host of heaven, and of the heavenly host of angels and of men on earth ; who was king from eternity, and reigned during the Old Testament dispensation ; came a king into this world, though his kingdom was not of it, nor was with observation : upon his ascension to heaven was made and declared Lord and Christ ; and now rules

in the hearts of his people, by his Spirit and grace, and whose spiritual reign will more manifestly appear in the latter day. But here it is to be understood of his reign on earth, which will be *personal, visible, and glorious*, and in a different manner from what it now is, when he will be king over all the earth. Zion, and Jerusalem, where he will reign, may be literally understood as the chief place of his residence during this state, the spot of ground where he was most despised and ill-treated. Here he will reign before his ancients gloriously, or in glory, in his own glory, both as God, and man, and mediator ; and in his Father's glory, and in the glory of his holy angels, in which he will come and appear, and therefore his appearing is called a glorious one : (Luke ix. 26. Tit. ii. 13.) and this before his *ancients*, the ancient patriarchs, both before the flood, as Adam, Abel, &c., and after the flood as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others ; the old Jewish church, the prophets and saints of the Old Testament dispensation ; the apostles and elders of the gospel churches under the new ; the four-and-twenty elders, the representatives of the gospel churches, so often spoken of in the book of the Revelations, very probably with reference to this text ; and *all the saints in all ages, who will now be raised from the dead and live and reign with*

him. *These* are his *ancients*, who are loved with an everlasting love, chosen in him before the foundation of the world, with whom a covenant was made in him and grace given to them in him before the world began ; in the midst and presence of these he will reign, and they shall behold his glory ; yea, they shall *appear* in glory, so may the words be rendered, *before his ancients*, who are *glory*, or *in glory* ; for they shall appear with him in glory, both in soul and body, having the glory of God upon them." (*Gill's Com. on the Bible, in loc.*)

With the view of the text here given by this pious and learned commentator, I cordially agree, except in the idea which he entertains, that the *spiritual* reign of Christ in the latter day will be distinct from his *personal* reign. They appear to me to be one and the same. But the object which I have in view in this quotation is to confirm, as far as a human opinion is capable of confirmation, the opinion which I have given, that the Saints of Christ will share with him the glory of his kingdom, an idea here very distinctly and lucidly advanced.

It is my desire, with the diffidence and humility which the solemn subject requires, to illustrate as far as I may be enabled, the nature and character of this reign, the fruit and glory

of the Redeemer's work of love. May he deign to humble and to enlighten my mind, as I attempt to speak of this theme of grace and joy !

It will be gathered from the foregoing statements, that I expect the personal and visible kingdom of Christ to rise out of the desolation and ruin of the fourth monarchy, in the last days of its divided state ; that I believe no fifth, dominant sovereignty, similar to the four monarchies of Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome, will ever be established upon earth ; but that the power of Christ when it smites "to shivers" the last of these monarchies in its divided state, will establish upon their subverted thrones, the everlasting throne of his grace and mediatorial strength : that I believe this throne will admit the subordination of other human sovereignties, and corroborate and support the blessings of civil government and concord through the world : that the glorified saints "of the first resurrection" will be associated with Christ in the direction and consolidation of this peaceful empire : and that the world will thus exhibit a gladdening spectacle of a vast population of men, still, indeed, mortal, and subject to occasional ill, but peaceful, generous, disinterested, living in concord and heartfelt union ; a union domestic, social, and

political ; attributing all their blessings to the grace and power of Christ, and recognising his will and love, alike in the exercise of power, and in the submission of obedience : and that the higher management and control of this world will be in the hands, first of Christ himself, and, under him, in the hands of men—of men, once like the mortal sojourners they govern, but now glorified like their Lord, and living *amidst their mortal kindred* as benefactors, princes, and kings. It is not needful to suppose their presence to be *always apparent* to their happy subjects ; but still their visible manifestations to be *sufficiently frequent*, to sustain the mutual allegiance and concord of mankind ; to cheer the intercourse of life ; and to perpetuate an abiding recognition of their intense benevolence and their sovereign authority.

I have felt it to be very difficult, during many past years, to admit the entrance into my mind of a recurrence to miraculous intercourse between heaven and earth. The influence of prejudice, and the habits of mental associations are exceedingly powerful ; and this influence, at the same time, is easily increased, by a dread of enthusiasm or weakness of judgment.

The human mind, since the degradation it has experienced through sin, has, more or less,

been disposed to shrink away from any *direct* manifestation of God. Even good men, renewed by grace, seem still too much entrammelled by this fear ; a fear which is, perhaps, enforced by the apprehension of reproach from their fellow-creatures, who, while they recognise a *distant, stately, and indistinct* notion of providence, *as vehemently oppose* a domination which would overawe their passions, and render painful the pursuits of ambition, pleasure, or wealth. Men love to live under a liberal feeling of independence, and to confine their notions of power, or of submission, to the existing authorities, to the existing means of science, and sources of emolument. Under this trammel, even good men are greatly disposed to *defer* any miraculous agency to *the last scene* of things ; to the demolition of the world ; to the final judgment ; to the translation of all human interests to *another* and altogether *different* world. With the concerns of the *present* scene, they love to associate, exclusively, an *unseen* and *spiritual* superintendence ; a superintendence which may amalgamate more easily with the views of philosophy, and with the current habits of human thought and action. Perhaps this disposition in good men has done much to strengthen the arm of infidelity, and to render the practical authority of

Christ in the world, an evanescent and powerless speculation. The strong and decisive assertion, "*By me kings reign, and princes decree judgment,*" loses all its grasp upon the heart, by its connexion with the *indistinct* and *vague* notion of providential appointment: an appointment which, *practically*, implies neither authority nor responsibility. Is it too much to affirm that the separation of the kingly power of Christ from the *visible* occupancy of the throne of this world, affords the readiest auxiliary to the workings of ambition and pride? The real and pressing conviction of his return to erect a tribunal of abiding justice upon this human theatre, would go far to awe rebellion of heart into subjection, and to reverse the practical estimate of power, influence, distinction, and wealth. To *transfer* the ultimate rectification of good and evil to another orb—to a different world, is just to render powerless the sanctions of revelation upon the human heart. We speak of *another* world, and the *atheist* heart, binding down all its hopes and fears to the *present* scene, smiles in scorn at the misty and untried futurity.

In opposition to this current mode of thought, I desire strongly to affirm, that the expectation of the reign of Jesus Christ, is in *accordance* with every *reasonable notion of philosophy*, and

with all *the history and the analogies* of the past dispensations of God.

God has made this planet and its inhabitants, and they have madly rebelled against his authority. They have introduced into this once fair scene of happiness, confusion, blood-shed, oppression, and death. They have exposed themselves to the penalties of that uncompromising law, under which, as dependent creatures, they are bound to God. In his consummate wisdom and unspeakable love, he has laid the burden of their revolt upon his adorable Son, in due hour become incarnate. Jesus Christ has died, a voluntary victim, in that world, and in that nature which had rebelled ; and God has constituted him, thus participant of our nature, the head of our race, "the second Adam," to retrieve the ruin of the first Adam ; to expel sin and misery from the world, and to reinstate mankind in more than the original felicity of their first creation ; and this to the praise and glory of his immutable attributes of truth and love. The *humiliation* of this Son on the *earth* is already a *matter of fact* —a matter of *historical record* as probable, and far more probable in the amount of its moral evidence, than are all the events emblazoned upon the page of human history. And if this humiliation of the Son of God to manhood and

to death be a matter, not of speculation, but of history, is it an expectation inconsistent with any knowledge to be derived from the past ; is it an expectation unwarranted by the analogies of human science and philosophy, that he who is *already* become man in his *mortal* condition, *for the attainment of a gracious and precise end*, should *again appear* as man in his *higher and immortal* condition, in order to *realise that very end*, and to restore that portion of his creation, which had received so terrific an injury, to rectitude, allegiance, and felicity ? I ask whether the *first fact*, that of his incarnation and death, be not a fact *correspondent* with the *second*, and naturally leading to it ? May not the grace which accomplished the *first* be expected to *accomplish the second* ? Can the terms irrelevancy, inaptitude, inconsistency, be more completely misapplied than in the serious announcement of this expectation ? Is not the *human exaltation* of Christ the *very reasonable sequel* of his *human depression*? And, if miraculous agency were needful to *effect the first*, shall it be rash and unphilosophical to expect the *recurrence of that agency* to effect the *second* ? *

But, in addition to the argument to be drawn from the *probability* of such a result, may I not

* Vide Preliminary Remarks to Ben Ezra, by the Rev. Edward Irving.

affirm, that this predicted result is in precise and full accordance with *all the analogies of the past dispensations of God?*

The historical records of the Bible reveal to us those dispensations in connexion with *one portion* of the earth, from the era of the creation, to a portion of time *subsequent* to the birth of Christ, and to the wide promulgation of his religion. I ask whether *the whole four thousand years* comprised in that interval of historic annals, be not identified with a period of *miraculous agency*? Was there not, throughout that period, an incessant recurrence of the visitations of superior beings to the earth, in connexion with the interests of God's cause? of beings occasionally visible, but in general unseen, and acting unfelt by those in whose welfare they were interested? Was not Adam familiar with the voice of his God? And even after the crown of dominion had fallen from his head, did not that same voice, which ere while was as music to his ear, address him "in the cool of the day," that sacred and sad hour of solitude and reflection, in order to carry conviction to his soul; and, if to prepare him for his exile, and wretchedness, and death, so likewise to cheer him with the hope of salvation, and in the promised seed of the woman, to lead forth his ardent expectations to him who should be "the Restorer of

the lost heritages to man?" And where, I would ask, has God given any intimation to man, that this EARTH is cast off to orphanage and to destruction? When has the stream of celestial light ever ceased to irradiate some lone valley or majestic temple of this lower world? Is not the whole period of the four thousand years of earth's sad history associated with the ministrations of beings superior to, and differing in their nature and habits from those to whom they came to minister? I gladly refer, in connexion with this subject, to the statements of one, whose living voice I often delighted to hear. "In order," he observes, "to intimate the perpetual intercourse between heaven and earth, a ladder was displayed to the patriarch Jacob, reaching from the one to the other, and 'the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.' Thus, also, when overwhelmed with fear of the power and indignation of Esau, whose approach he expected, was Jacob comforted by God with a vision of heavenly hosts commissioned to protect him. 'And Jacob went on his way; and the angels of God met him: and when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host, and he called the name of that place, Mahanaim, or the two armies.' Thus we find them often *appearing*, and still often *ministering*, to the servants of God

in the various trials and distresses to which they were exposed. It was an angel who brought to Elisha bread in the wilderness, that he might be strengthened for his journey. An angel appeared to Gideon, to strengthen him, and to give him an assurance of victory. An angel appeared to Zechariah when ministering before the altar, to announce to him the birth of an illustrious forerunner of the Messiah. It was an angel who showed to the Prophets Daniel and Zechariah, and to the Apostle John, ‘the things which should come upon the earth.’ An angel delivered Peter out of prison, and broke the chains by which he was bound. An angel stood by Paul, to comfort him when about to be shipwrecked, and to declare to him that no harm should befall him or the persons with him. The angels are said to take charge of the servant of God, ‘lest at any time he should dash his foot against a stone.’ The angels also are employed as instruments in the hand of God to defend the true Christian from Satan, and to defeat his evil machinations against the Church.”*

And are these occasional visits of a superior order of beings to mortal men, for guidance, protection, and comfort, a theme fitly associated with the charge of presumption, fanaticism, or

* Venn’s Sermons, vol. i. p. 200.

folly? Does it depress the sublimity of benevolence, to link its efforts to weakness, repentance, or human sorrow? I love rather the continuance of that good man's train of thought: "What *encouraging* views does this representation open to us! How in the midst of perils, or in the depths of solitudes, may we comfort ourselves with the idea of being surrounded by the heavenly hosts! What confidence may we place in their protection, if only we fear and serve God! Oh! when shall we duly estimate the blessings of the divine favour!"

But besides the guidance, the protection, and the friendship of angelic spirits, does not the scripture intimate to us the anticipated presence of an incarnate Deity? In the quietness and humility of a *human* form, did he not condescend to eat with Abraham? Did he not appear to Manoah, and ascend in the sacred flame? Did he not commune with Moses, and appear to him as friend speaks to friend? Did not his glorious brightness illuminate the pillar of fire by night, in order to guide the wandering hosts of Israel? Did not the same celestial radiance, the mysterious influence of his presence, dwell often between the cherubim of glory over the mercy-seat? And, at the dedi-

cation of the temple, built by Solomon, did not that glorious Shechinah draw forth the admiring burst of praise, in pointed reference to this future advent of Messiah into the world, "Will God indeed dwell with man?" Oh! the people of God, in those elder times, had no suspicion of evil, had no disposition to discover the lurking injuries of fanaticism in the view which they entertained of the kind and miraculous intercourse of God with man! Rather they loved these proofs of his paternal bounty; and saw no reason why the friendship or the counsels of higher beings or of nobler spirits should mislead, or harass, or perplex the minds of men.

In the retrospect of these facts, is it then rash to affirm, that the miraculous intercourse of heaven with earth, of God with men, of celestial ministrants with men, that this hallowed intercourse is closely interwoven with the whole history of four thousand years? Are not these the bright spots of human history, the proofs of divine compassion, and the *illustration* of that ultimate connexion of heaven with earth, when the anointed Ruler, "the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" shall dwell in our world, not, as once, in the midst of one nation, and by the mysterious radiance of the cloudy Shechinah;

but in the *wide circle* of the whole earth, and by the glorious brightness of a *personal manifestation*?

Is not the *more recent history* of Christendom, in truth, a dreary *exception* to this sacred fellowship with higher beings, rather than a *rule* by which to interpret the future revelation of the august kingdom of Christ upon earth?*

And has not the dark and silent monotony of eighteen hundred years of unbelief, ingratitude, and spiritual misrule; a darkness and a silence, broken only by the lurid fires of persecution, or by the shouts of crusaders against infidels, in *practice* less infidel than themselves; has not this dreary sameness of unbelief gone far to obliterate the sacred remembrance of the ancient visitations of mercy; and tended to open yet wider and wider, the lips of that philosophic scepticism, which scornfully asks, "*Where is the promise of his coming, for all things continue as they were since the fathers fell asleep?*" Has not this fearful abuse of spiritual blessings thrown back to an infinite distance from the ordinary responsibilities of life, the steady and immutable authority of Christ? And would not the recurrence of miraculous agency under the

* I need not here express my refusal to number with these former manifestations from above, the puerile and pretended legends of the papal church.

fructifying influence of the eternal Spirit, be an era of blessing to the earth which no human language can describe? Would not the intercourse of the glorified Elect of past ages, with the still mortal inhabitants of a present age, be the commencement of a dispensation of justice and of charity, long indeed depicted on the prophetic page, but then first to be realized in the practice and felicity of mankind? Would not the pacific sceptre of Christ and of his saints, exhibiting the law, the ordinance, the morality, and the faith of the gospel, as the exclusive code of domestic, social, and international communication, (of all which the type has been already furnished, under the theocracy of the Jews,) would not this condition and administration of human things produce exactly that happy and disinterested course of daily conduct, under which the wolf would dwell with the lamb, and the lion be led by the gentle hand of playful infancy?

May it not then with truth be affirmed, that the interpretation thus given to the personal reign of Christ is *analogous* to all that hitherto has passed in the accredited dispensations of God with man? Is it not in truth the manifestation in *full* and *actual* existence, of that which in previous days has been exhibited only in the *type*, or in the more restrained visitations of

angelic messengers to the world? I know well, and have felt strongly the force of prejudice in theology, and in the habitual associations of the heart; but I am now daily more and more convinced, that the prospect thus held out by revelation to the world, gives *a distinctness and a reality to the history of incarnate love*, which the prevailing notions of some distant world of great, but at present unimaginable felicity, cannot equally produce!

The scriptures afford some further illustrations of this subject, to which I would still request the attention of the pious reader.

The notices of angelic intercourse with men, to which I have hitherto referred, have been *visible* and precise, of which those who experienced it were absolutely *conscious*. There are, however, intimations of such intercourse which at the time have been hidden from the knowledge of those directly interested in their existence. It will at once occur to the mind, that Satanic agency is of this kind. Satan is called by Christ himself "*the prince of this world:*" his hosts of fallen but still angelic beings—angelic in their capacity and means of moral influence; these hosts are numerous, subtle, and malignant, roving the world in the restless pursuit of crime, "*seeking whom they may devour;*" exerting all their skill and sagacity to produce

a sceptical spirit, a scorn of sacred things, a hatred of order, peace and virtue.

It is obvious here to refer to various facts recorded in scripture, illustrative of these painful declarations. Satan was a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets, to persuade Ahab to go up to battle. (1 Kings xxii. 21, 22.; 2 Chron. xx. 21, 22.) Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. (1 Chron. xxi. 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.) "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them; and the Lord said unto Satan, whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it; and the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man; one that feareth God and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, doth Job fear God for nought; hast thou not made an hedge about him and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land; but put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face: and the Lord said unto Satan, Behold all that he hath is in thy power,

only upon himself put not forth thine hand." (Job. i. 6.) "Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound lo ! these eighteen years, be loosed on the Sabbath day?" (Luke xiii. 61.) " Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat ; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." (Luke xxii. 31.) " Peter said, Ananias why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost ?" (Acts v. 3.)

These are but specimens of those numerous references to an unseen and malignant agency, of which the *subjects* were *unconscious*, which lie scattered upon the page of scripture. But to these invisible and *depraved* spectators of human character and conduct, are opposed the *heavenly ministrants*, who bow adoring to the name of Christ, and who rejoice to watch the steps, and to strengthen the faith of those who " are heirs of salvation." A remarkable instance of this *invisible* combat for human welfare is recorded in the Book of Daniel. (chap. x. ver. 10.) " And behold" (records the prophet, for the instruction of after times)—" and behold an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees, and upon the palms of my hands ; and he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand up-

right, for unto thee am I sent ; and when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one-and-twenty days : but lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days."

This remarkable occurrence, recorded by the prophet, brings to my recollection a passage from a living writer, Dr. Chalmers, which I cannot omit to transcribe. In reference to the sacred scriptures, he observes, "They give us a distant glimpse of something more extended : they present a faint opening, through which may be seen some few traces of a wider and nobler dispensation : they bring before us a dim transparency, on the other side of which the images of an obscure magnificence dazzle indistinctly upon the eye : they offer us no details ; and man, who ought not to attempt a wisdom above that which is written, should never put forth his hand to the drapery of that impenetrable curtain which God, in his mys-

terious wisdom, has spread over those ways of which it is but a very small portion that we know of them.”*

To this wise and reverent suggestion I desire most entirely to submit my thoughts; but I will venture to ask, whether in *this transaction* revealed by the angel to Daniel, God has not condescended himself to *remove a portion of that mysterious “drapery”* which hides the intercourse of a world unseen? Are we not here told that in the councils of Persia, (with which no doubt the welfare of Judah, through the medium of the Assyrian monarch, was connected,) that in the councils of Persia were some *invisible* but very *influential* spectators, who took a deep interest in the politics of that hour. The men who canvassed the topics of that council-chamber, and who shared the anxieties of that mighty monarch, were utterly ignorant of the *actual scene* which was passing around them. During one-and-twenty days did the perplexing discussions of that council *detain* the angel from the accomplishment of his mission to Daniel, and urge him to seek the aid of an associate minister of mercy to strengthen his efforts against the malignant policy of a Satanic foe, here desig-

* Vide Chalmers’s Astronomical Sermons, p. 148.

nated by the term “Prince of the Kingdom of Persia.” The nature of this struggle is yet more plainly unfolded to us by the expression used by the same angel to Daniel, in the 1st verse of the 12th chapter : “ And at that time shall Michael stand up, the *great prince which standeth for the children of thy people.*” May we not, I ask, without rashness gather from this expression, that Michael had a special charge from God in the protection of the people of Israel ? And in a similar manner may we not suppose the fallen angel, denominated “ the Prince of the Kingdom of Persia,” to have been set over that province, by him who declared to the Son of God, “ *All these kingdoms will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*” And have we not also in the Book of the Revelations, (xii. 7,) a similar allusion to the unseen conflicts of higher spirits in connexion with our world ? “ *And there was war in heaven ; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon ; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not : neither was their place found any more in heaven ;*” in all probability the political heaven of the Roman Empire, since Polytheism at this time gave place to Christianity.

CHAPTER X.

THE REIGN OF THE GLORIFIED SAINTS.

THE review, however brief, which we have thus far taken of the facts connected with the final judgment of the world, as revealed in the scriptures, will surely justify the assertion that the *personal* reign of Jesus Christ and his saints over the EARTH, is in complete analogy with the former reign of the Messiah and his angels over the *special* and *limited* interests of Judea. If now we substitute for the *emblem* of the Shechinah the *personal* glory of Emmanuel; and if for the *angelic ministrants* we substitute the *glorified Elect*, raised to share the felicity of their Lord; and if for the *limited* region of Judea we substitute the *wide range* of the earth, “*now become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ,*” we shall have some-

thing more than an obscure intimation of the nature of “the reign” to which the saints of God are privileged to aspire. “We shall REIGN on the earth.” Their high and glorious distinction will be to imitate their Lord in his work of mercy and peace to the world. “*He shall judge the world in righteousness,*” and they shall partake in his peaceful legislation. “*The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad for them.*” “*And the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.*” “*The Spirit shall be poured upon them from on high:*” “*then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field; and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever: and my people shall dwell in a peaceful habitation, and in sure dwelling and in quiet resting places.*”

In connexion with this view “of the kingdom of God,” how luminous and intelligible become the promises—“*You shall sit on thrones judging the tribes of Israel:*” “*Be thou ruler over ten cities:*” “*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne:*” “*Lord, what is man:*” “*Thou hast put all things under his feet.*” With what a propriety and interest do these terms of honour and authority now present themselves to our view! What a noble idea of moral excellency; of active usefulness; of zeal for truth

and charity, becomes associated with the resurrection to life and glory! The *glory* of the redeemed is the glory of Christ! The *happiness* of man, the allegiance of the world to God.

Under this administration of glorified humanity, how beautifully illustrated is at length that angelic song of gratulation to the shepherds of Bethlehem, **GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD-WILL TO MEN!** The reconciliation of the world is come! During many a dark and dreary age, where has **PEACE** been compelled to dwell? Despised and scorned,* like the ocean weed tossed upon the restless waves, she has found no place of repose; but at length the prophetic voice is realized, "*Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*" And what is the *character* of that government which the glorified saints will now exercise, as delegated to them by the great King himself? What is *his* view of power, and influence, and authority, and strength? (Luke xxii. 24.) "*And there was also a strife among them which of them should be accounted the greatest: and he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest*

* Vide Montgomery's *World before the Flood*, p. 24.

among you, let him be as the youngest ; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve : *for whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat or he that serveth.* • *But I am among you as he that serveth ; ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations ; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*"

How lovely is this delineation of power and authority ! How different from the wonted estimates of strength which have prevailed on earth ! Seldom are pride and selfishness separated now from the possession of wealth and influence ! But in the judgment of the Son of God, and in the decisions of his kingdom, eminence in POWER is eminence in HUMILITY ; superiority in COMMAND is superiority in BENEFICENCE. How high then the office ; how great the glory ; how splendid the triumph ; how efficient the usefulness of that ELECT and REDEEMED church, to whom God will give power to maintain the earth in peace ; to guard it from satanic assaults, and to uphold the cause of religion, the claims of truth, and the joys of charity in the world ! Can a nobler felicity be imagined than in the very presence and under the smiles of a redeeming God, to exercise this dominion over a world once the ACELDAMA of the universe, but now restored almost to the PARADISE of EDEN ?

In connexion with this part of our subject I would call the attention of the reader to the 32nd chapter of Deuteronomy : “ *Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance: when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of ISRAEL; for the Lord’s portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.*” In the Septuagint Version we read : “ *When he separated the nations, he set the bounds of the people according to the numbers of the ANGELS.*” Is it an unbecoming inference which has been drawn from this expression, more especially when we bear in memory the appointment of the angel MICHAEL to the peculiar interests of Israel—is it, I ask, an unreasonable inference, that the earth may be divided at this moment into angelic sovereignties ; and that if our eyes were opened to the mighty facts that pass concealed around us, we might discover in this division, the precise type and model of the sovereignties of the elect church ? Is this a question advancing a single step beyond the legitimate boundaries prescribed by veneration for the scriptures, and awe before the majesty of God ?

I am confirmed in this inference by that re-

markable expression, already considered, in Heb. ii. 5. “*For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak;*” (*την οικουμενην την μελλονσαν.*) That “world to come” appears to me to intimate the final dispensation; the kingdom yet to be established; “the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” The *present* dispensation, from the facts already established, is evidently under the *control of angels*; but it would appear, from the assertion of the apostle, that in the manifestation of the day of *Christ’s kingly glory*, the world will be placed under the hallowed sway of the *glorified saints*, to whom “*it has been the Father’s good pleasure to give the kingdom.*”

It will further corroborate this view of the kingdom of Christ, to advert to the *peculiar relation* in which the Elect Church actually stands to Jesus Christ. This is a great mystery; and the contrite believer may well lift up his head in adoring wonder, as he contemplates this mysterious delineation. The CHURCH, in various passages of scripture, is designated as the **BRIDE OF CHRIST**; a term, to whose explication no human language, nay, no human thought, can render justice. If there be an image descriptive of joy, honour, purity, intimacy, and love, it is the marriage union of a celestial monarch: and this image GOD has deigned to

employ, in order to describe the felicity of his Church.

It is at the moment of the second advent of the Messiah, even at the hour of his *kingly manifestation* to the earth ; it is at this hour that the inspired apostle reveals to us, “*that the marriage of the Lamb is come, for the Bride hath made herself ready.*” The mind labours to interpret this image. A monarch, virtuous, powerful, just, beneficent, energetic, selects a joyous companion of his schemes, his intimacies, his beneficent objects, his views of national improvement and happiness ; and he realizes this plan precisely at the *moment* in which he receives the sceptre of his *kingly honour*. And has the eternal Spirit deigned to reveal, under this image, the everlasting union of the Church with Christ ?—an union to be unbroken and complete through endless ages !—an union, productive at once of unmixed *mutual joy*, and of *richest beneficence* to a renovated world ! Oh ! well may the same apostle exclaim, “*Behold what manner of love !*” “*Will God indeed dwell with man ?*” Yes ; even so has matchless grace willed and revealed it. “*Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit ; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to*

revive the heart of the contrite ones!" "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me."

The GLORY of this Elect Church, thus taken into union with the eternal Son of God, was in a wonderful manner revealed to the Apostle John in the 21st chapter of the Apocalypse. "*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*" And the angel said to him, "*Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.*" He then beheld a bright and beauteous city, surrounded by walls, which may well be called "*Salvation,*" and their gates "*praise;*" "*a city lying four square,*" enriched by all the jewelry of creation; "*having the glory of God,*" and "*built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.*"

The apostle saw no temple therein, for the material type was no longer needed. The inhabitants then *see face to face.* "*The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.*" The material sun might still, indeed, pour his glorious beams upon this mysterious structure;

but it *needed* them not. Its own light exceeded the meridian lustre of the sun : “*And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the Nations of them which are saved shall walk in the LIGHT of IT ; and the Kings of the Earth do bring their glory and honour into IT. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day ; for there shall be no night there.*” (The internal light is independent of external luminaries.) “*And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into IT. And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month : and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse : but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it : and his servants shall serve him : and they shall see his face ; and his name shall be in their forehead. And there shall be no night there ; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun ; for the Lord God giveth them light. And they shall REIGN for ever and ever.*”

How elevated is this imagery ! how costly this magnificence ! how pure this dominion ! how perfect this felicity ! Strength, excellence,

beauty, honour, joy, decoration, glory, beneficence ; these are the ideas which the delineation of this city, this bride, these saints, conveys to the astonished mind ! They may, perhaps, be all comprised in the expressions **GLORY** and **BENEFICENCE**. The redeemed saints, while thus they surround the **THRONE** of the Almighty, as the finished work of his eternal attributes, will constitute also under Christ, their Head, the **SOURCE** of his largest liberality to the world. “*The kings of the earth do bring their glory to this city :*” and on the banks of its inexhaustible river grows “*the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. And the gates of this city are never shut by night or day ; for there is no night there.*”* How plainly, and how beautifully do these expressions bring

* I beg the reader to mark, in this description of the celestial city, the clear *distinction* between the *city itself*, and the *kings and saved nations of the earth*. The city is generally interpreted to denote a *heavenly state after* the general resurrection. Is it not, however, clear, from the whole context, that the *city* is the emblem of the *bride*, and of the *bride in the day of her espousals*, which take place at the *commencement*, not at the *termination* of the “thousand years.” *The kings and saved nations* are thus the *mortal dwellers* on the earth who *bring their willing homage* to the *glorified church* by whom they are *governed*, and who gladly walk in *her LIGHT*. The **SCENE** is thus the **EARTH**, in connexion with the **KINGLY STATE** of the **SAINTS** of the *first resurrection*.

to our view the *saved* and *mortal* dwellers upon the earth, connected in joyful allegiance with the glorified PRINCES of the world, whose counsels, protection, and friendship they continually enjoy. In the beneficent hands of these "KINGS and PRIESTS unto GOD," the sacred instruments of mercy are prepared, "the leaves medicinal for the healing of the nations!"

To the interpretation here offered, I would beg to subjoin the commentary of a recent writer on the Apocalypse. (Chap. xx.) "This chapter is so entirely future, and relates to events so much beyond our present comprehension; that it would be at once presumptuous and useless to attempt any *detailed* elucidation of its solemn and glorious promises. *Yet we have no reason to doubt* that this part of the prophecy, like all the former, *describes real acts* of the divine Providence. The outline at least is clear, is reconcileable to human reason; and seems to receive striking confirmation from the whole body of prophetic scripture."

"After the abolition of hostile powers, there shall be a *renovated system*, in which Christianity shall be the paramount, or the only religion. The evil spirit shall be despoiled of the guilty supremacy which he has exercised over the human mind since the fall; and some signal

and pre-eminent display of the favour of God shall distinguish those who died in the faith from the earliest ages of the Church; their *open resurrection, or reunion of soul and body, with some extraordinary and preternatural addition of power and glory, physical and spiritual,* shall mark them out to the wonder of men, and justify the magnificent prophetic promises of the triumph over death, and the *restoration of the world.*"

(Chap. xxi.) "This chapter seems to be a *parallelism* of the passage in the preceding, which describes the *coming happiness* of the earth. The direct reasons for conceiving that this chapter refers only to the EARTH, are these—the celestial Church is represented *descending from heaven* to complete that final union which had been so long symbolized by *marriage*; this happiness is promised to the people of '*the first resurrection*,' the announcement of the sentence of those who had rejected, or abandoned the faith *follows*; and, in express contrast to the fall of Babylon, one of the angels who had inflicted the plague on her, leads the apostle to contemplate the triumph of the Church—an *earthly punishment* being contrasted with an *earthly triumph*; though the earth may be but the earlier place of a happiness, which is declared to be, like those to whom it is given, immortal. The description of the triumphant Church has now been given.

The *triumph* is that of ‘*the thousand years*.’ The angel had already declared that the marriage of the Lamb *was come*. The present description is that of the bride: ‘*Come hither, I will show thee the Bride*.’ The marriage, or intimate union of the Church with Christ in his *manifest glory and sovereignty* is, therefore, *antecedent* to the second, or general resurrection.”*

It may facilitate, in part, the reception of the ideas now presented to the mind of the reader, if I refer to an actual *anticipation* of this predicted intercourse of *mortal* and *immortal* men, upon the *same* earth, and at the *same* time. I have referred to many illustrations of the intercourse of *men* with *angels*; but the scriptures contain one illustration of the intercourse of *Christ* and *glorified men*, with *feeble* and *mortal* men. This record we find in the 17th Chapter of Matthew. The remarkable occurrence took place on Mount Tabor. “*And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with him.*” (We are told by St. Luke, that “*they spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.*”) Then answered Peter and said unto Jesus, *Lord, it is*

* Vide Croly on the Apocalypse, pp. 279—283.

good for us to be here ; if thou wilt, let us make three tabernacles ; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, hear ye him. And when they heard it, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Rise, and be not afraid. And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.”

What a sublime, condescending, and momentous occurrence is here related by the Evangelist ! what a comment on the preceding interpretation of the millennial reign ! what a clue to its difficulties ! what an illustration of its possible existence ! Here are brought into actual intercourse, MOSES and ELIAS, *in a state of glory* ; CHRIST *in his glory* ; and the astonished disciples in their *weak and mortal condition*. The apostles *know* the glorified men to be Moses and Elias ; they know the *transfigured Saviour* to be the humble Jesus of Nazareth ; they hear the intimation of an event soon to take place ; they feel inexpressibly happy ; they say, “ *It is good to be here ;* ” they propose to perpetuate the scene. Their terror comes not till the mighty voice of the Father bears his testimony to the glorious character and mysterious work of his incarnate Son.

How powerfully is this event calculated to assist our weak apprehensions ! to bring before us, as a matter of *actual experience*, the predicted connexion of the risen saints with Christ ! and, in this their glorified condition, their connexion with the *material earth*, on which they are destined to be the agents of eternal peace and mercy ! After this scene of *contrasted glory and simple humanity*, why should we feel any reluctance to receive the blessed truth, “we shall REIGN on the EARTH ?”

But even this remarkable event is not the only intimation that glory and mortal humanity may unite in friendship and activity. Let us examine Exodus xxxiv. 29. “*And it came to pass when Moses came down from Mount Sinai ;—And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, (or was glorified;) and they were afraid to come nigh him.*” Again, (Acts vi. 15.) “*And all that were sitting in the council looking stedfastly upon Stephen, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel!*” How near may be another world to us ! How soon may all its glories be unfolded ! Thus, 2 Kings ii. 11. “*And it came to pass as they still went on and talked, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire : and Elijah was taken up to heaven.*” Again,

(2 Kings vi. 17.) “*And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, open the eyes of the young man, that he may see.* And the Lord opened his eyes, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses, and CHARIOTS OF FIRE round about *Elisha.*” How bright these anticipations of the future! how cheerful these coruscations of glory amidst the pathways of the wilderness. Oh! “*it doth not, indeed, yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* For when Christ, who is our LIFE, shall APPEAR, *then shall we also APPEAR with him in glory.*”

We may here remark, that glorified objects appear to have an *inherent* glory, or a power of emitting a light, of beauty and of lustre, compared with which the light of the sun is dim. When the Apostle Paul was struck down, in his journey to Damascus, it was by a light quite independent of the light of day. The apostle, in his relation of the wondrous event, before the multitude at Jerusalem, uses these words: “*It came to pass, that as I made my journey, and was come nigh to Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven A GREAT LIGHT, round about me.*” Afterward he remarks, “*And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came to Damascus.*” Also (Acts xii. 7.) when an angel

appeared to Peter, we read, “*And behold the angel of the Lord stood by him; and a LIGHT shined in the prison: and his chains fell off from his hands.*” This glorious LIGHT shone brightly in the cloud by night, to Israel, and rested upon the bush which appeared to Moses like a burning flame. This was the LIGHT which revealed to the eyes of Elisha the chariot and horses as those of fire. INHERENT LIGHT seems to be the true import of the word GLORY. It would, however, appear, from the various facts already stated, that glorified beings have a power of concealing this splendour, as well as of emitting it. Thus says the apostle, “*Be careful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained ANGELS unawares.*” Those glorious guests who visited Abraham, came in the garb of ordinary humanity, and kindly shared the food which Abraham provided. The angel that appeared to Manoah, seemed like a fellow-mortal, till suddenly he ascended in the flame of fire.

I repeat, then, how *near* may be our contact with a higher world! how *ready* our intercourse with superior orders of intelligent creatures! Is it not a reasonable anticipation, that in the future scenes of predicted glory, it may be within the power of the glorified saints still to mingle *invisibly* amidst the mortal sojourners

of earth ; sometimes to veil the radiance with which they will be clothed ? And thus when the earth shall be at rest, the voice of war be silent, and strife be hushed in the land, it may be permitted to these beneficent immortals, though *reigning* in the world, to lay aside their ensigns of power, and to cheer some lonely valley, some peaceful home of virtue and of loveliness, with the intercourse of a kindness that shall only seem *kindred* with its *own* !

And here I cannot omit to present to the mind of the Christian reader, a view of the doctrine of ELECTION, which in this connexion has deeply gladdened my own heart. What is Election ? It is the sovereign good pleasure and mercy of God, wherein he has chosen in Christ, those whom he has been pleased to love in him from the foundation of the world. And when, as in the words of our burial service, “ He shall have *accomplished the number of his elect*,” he shall then “ *hasten his kingdom*.” There shall then be no reason why he should *delay* his joy in his eternal union with his Church. Now “ the Bride is ready, and the marriage supper of the Lamb is come !” Now the glory of his Church is realized ! Now the prayer is fulfilled, “ *that they may be one* :” one in him, and one in each other ! Now the scorn of the profane, joyful in the divisions of Zion, shall

cease ; and the eternal GLORY, shall be the eternal ONENESS of the Church : ONE MIND, ONE WILL, ONE JOY, ONE SERVICE, one duration and conformity of bliss to the bliss of Christ. This shall be their ONENESS for ever : one activity of zeal, charity, beneficence and mercy to man ! And THEN, and not *till* then, shall the intercessory prayer be accomplished, and a renovated world shall know "*that the Father sent the Son,*" to be the anointed Ruler, and *Source of pardon and strength,* when manifested as KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS.

What then, I ask, is the doctrine of Election ? It is "*Glory to God in the highest, and in earth peace and goodwill to men.*" I recur to the feeble illustration already given. Mark that land revolted, ruined, lawless, ignorant, miserable : the sources of knowledge are dried up ; the dispositions of the inhabitants are hostile to order, peace, and law, and civilization. The monarch surveys the wretched, perturbed, rebellious, and ignorant population. He possesses a power over the human heart : he *selects* a *chosen and faithful band* : he makes them *willing to learn, and glad to obey* : he educates, feeds, comforts them : he raises them to *honour, and rank, and influence, and power* : he makes them *like himself* : he infuses into them his *own character* ; his love of justice, truth, and

charity : he associates them in his government, and kindles within their breasts a *burning zeal for purity, order, and happiness* : he puts an inferior sceptre into their hands : he gives them power over the wills of others : he points out to them the desolate and ignorant population of his kingdom, and says, “freely ye have received, now freely give!” Toil for me as I have toiled for you, “*and the wilderness yet shall smile*, and the revolted shall kiss the sceptre of my love.” Such is ELECTION. It is wondrous to choose the wretched and the guilty, in order to pardon freely, and to freely save ; to make slaves a partner of the throne ; to give to the rebel a renovated heart of moral purity and strength ! But, oh ! is it not wondrous also, to say to that elected and redeemed band, “GO AND DO YE LIKEWISE.”

CHAPTER XI.

THE ELECT CHURCH.

THE reluctance of mankind to recognise the *practical* authority of God, is apparent in the whole operations and history of human societies. I have before remarked the *indistinct* notion of his *distant* and *paternal sovereignty* to be favourable to human vanity, and tranquillizing to human fear; but the *vivid* and *influential notion* of his moral government, to press far too heavily upon the principle of independence, to gain a ready admittance into the heart. *Rebellion* characterizes human crime; and if the offended Monarch, by any perversion of the understanding in the rebel, can be supposed to exercise his power to ward off evils which belong to the weakness and inconstancy of the rebellious, they will gladly admit the shadowy obligation of a nominal homage to his crown; but if the

question of *practical* and *actual* allegiance be superadded, this shadowy obligation previously admitted will change into a rugged and substantial reluctance to any such admission of his claims.

This principle of resistance to the sovereign authority of God, is strikingly manifested in the effort made to break down the strength of those mighty barriers which divide the *converted* from the *unconverted*; to place human virtue upon the same level of natural advantages, and to give to individuals the glory of their own merit, and the value of their own exertions. The doctrine of Election is oppressive to the human mind. The privilege of mercy they deem to be *inclusive*, not *exclusive*. It must belong to the *claims* of the *subject*, not to the *will* of the *governor* and yet this doctrine of Election, thus decried as *tyrannical* in the sovereign, and *destructive* of *moral virtue* in the subject, appears to me to be *interwoven* with *every part* of the *human system*; to be imbedded, as it were, in all the *analogies* of society, and to exhibit, in very truth, the most *expansive views* of the divine *benevolence*.

I. Let us advert to the *analogies* of the *human system*.

Is not the principle of Election to special advantages visible on every side? Do we not

find it in the very climates and various temperatures of the earth ? and in the combinations of political institutions ? Why are the ravages of disease, and the perils of climate, connected with one country and not with another ? Why are political advantages the birthright of one people and not of another ? Why is the power of despotism in the hand of an European, to oppress the victim of weakness in the Asiatic or African ? Why are the refinements of science prevalent in one quarter of the globe, and the degradations of barbarism in the other ? And is not the same *inequality*, the same *special choice* in the distribution of benefits, equally apparent in the *superiorities* of *mental character* ? Why are some men endowed with personal qualities which at once lift them above the level on which the multitudes stand around them ? Why have the names of Alfred, Newton, Bacon, or Locke become endeared to our own land, but because they possessed qualifications superior to those which mark out the ordinary portraiture of human agents ?

It may be admitted that men of this stamp have *cultivated* their talents, and have exercised them in a *judicious* manner ; but was not the possession of those talents a gift *exclusive* of their own sagacity or their own industry ? Was it not an *exclusive* privilege which God

himself conferred? Is not then, I ask, the doctrine of personal election to eternal life, in accordance with all these analogies of climate, civilization, science, art, and mental endowments?. May not God bestow his gifts independently of man's permission? May he not, with the hand of sovereign power, arrest the rebel in his guilty course; pour light upon his understanding; address his own mysterious reasonings to his heart, and under the wondrous motives derived from incarnate love, bind him in a new and blessed allegiance to his government for ever? May he not place him in special mercy, beneath the grasp of his Almighty hand, and never let go his hold till he has guided him in safety through the foes and the snares of life, and presented him "faultless before the presence of his glory," with deep and exceeding joy? Shall this act of clemency be denied to him because it has the character of exclusion and speciality? "*Is thine eye evil because I am good?*"

II. But is not this very doctrine, repulsive as it may be in its *immediate* aspect to human pride—is it not, in fact, a doctrine connected with the most expansive operations of divine benevolence?

The gifts of God are not limited in their *influence*, although they may be *exclusive* in their

original distribution. The sun cannot shine specially on one favoured head, without pouring its warmth and light on many beside. To elevate one, is in truth to elevate many. Have not human beings derived the largest measure of their blessings from this principle of apparent exclusion? Is there a gift so bounteous to a family, a parish, a province, a nation, as an individual endowed with high qualities, and raised in moral excellence *above* the level of his kindred men?

Has the world reason to murmur because good and great men are occasionally raised up to give the law to society, the tone to morals, or the lofty purpose of virtue to many inferior minds which revolve around them? Is *speciality* of endowment a *solitary* blessing, drawing aside the possessor from active usefulness, and forcing him away from all the sympathies which bind and refresh and invigorate the mass of his fellows? Rather is not superiority of talent, industry, or virtue, *beneficial to others* precisely in the degree in which it exists in those on whom it is, as we term it, *arbitrarily conferred*? Is not a special and direct endowment to any individual, an *intermediate* endowment to those around him? *Can* a light be in the hand of one, and its rays be *restrained* from emanating to others? Is a cold, dull *solitude* the element

in which mental superiority delights to dwell ? and would our happiness have been augmented if one dreary monotony of talent, during successive ages, had overspread the aspect of human society ? *If we could* have *reduced* to our own *low level* the towering aspirations of our Alfred, Newton, Bacon, and others, should we by this depression have gained much to our species ? Should we have gained any large accession to our enjoyment, if thus successful in the effort to contract the principle of generous but mysterious endowment, and to refuse that a single healthful wave should ripple over the stagnant surface of our degradation and ignorance ? The chief value surely of these special gifts to *individuals*, is found in the result to *society at large*. Our best blessings have flowed down to us from these individual channels. It is the property of mercy to confer a twofold benefit. It blesses alike him who gives, and him who receives ; and it is the glorious prerogative of superior virtue to impart freely that which it has freely received. There is a noble restlessness in lofty minds, which ever forces forward the lingering work of human improvement and happiness.

And this is relatively true of all *degrees* of superior virtue. The generous mind, however limited its physical power, and however nar-

row its actual range of effort, is large and unfettered in its sympathies and its wishes. In these, at least, it is kindred with its God, and presses on towards the imitation of the divine beneficence. The virtuous *servant*, the virtuous *cottager*, the virtuous *child*, however small his measure of special endowment above his fellows, is yet a *real blessing*, as far as that endowment *extends*. In his little sphere, bounded though it may be by poverty, or circumscribed by knowledge, he is yet a steady light, a humble guide, a holy example, a voice of truth, an encouragement to what is good, a reproof to what is evil. It comes within his narrow means to wipe away some tear, which the winds of heaven might otherwise alone dry up; to cheer some sorrow, which might otherwise rattle in the unsolaced heart; to fix some purpose of virtuous action, which was just wavering to its fall; and to impart some counsel, just as error was making good its cruel grasp upon the deluded understanding. In all this election of individuals to peculiar moral or mental advantages, do we not mark the *beneficent* arrangement of God, who associates the diffusion of his mercies with human agency, and who chooses, in mysterious sovereignty, his *own instruments*, that they may become subservient to his *higher aims* of mercy to mankind?

And has not the doctrine of personal election to eternal life in Christ Jesus, the same high and hallowed bearing upon the *world's* welfare? Are the elect "*gathered out of every tongue, and tribe, and people,*" and prepared by special grace amidst the trials of time, for the glories of eternity? Are they united to Christ with an ultimate oneness, which shall eradicate every single feeling or principle of non-conformity to his will? Are they *thus* united to him as a bride is prepared for her beloved and her friend, in order to the enjoyment of a *solitary* felicity? OR to be made *also* instrumental to the felicity of others? Perfect love disposes to perfect imitation. We resemble that which our affections supremely embrace. What then has been the conduct of Jesus Christ in the intercourse which he has deigned to establish between himself and the earth? He came to forget himself in his recollection of the misery of others. He came to pourtray his Father's character by the exhibition of his *own*; to make known his Father's generosity by the costly sacrifice he was himself ready to make—he came amidst the grovelling, the selfish, and the earthly, to tell a tale of disinterested love, at which such selfishness might well have hung down her head. He came amidst the guilty, the wretched, and the lost, to reveal a design

of mercy, at which angels rejoice with exceeding joy, and before which the aching and the burdened heart may throw off the weight under which it labours! And what must be the design of such a Benefactor in espousing to himself in glory, an Elect and ransomed and healed Church? Can it be for any purpose different from those which he has previously manifested to the world? Can it be to *wrap up* the exhibitions of grace which he has hitherto manifestly laboured to *unfold*? Rather can it be for any inferior purpose than to associate with himself an elect immortal Agency connected with his own glorified humanity? in order that, encircled by this agency, he may again come forth from his Father's presence to effect in the earth the ultimate repeal of every curse, and the recovery of the lost heritages of mankind! Oh, why is the world called to rejoice "because the marriage-supper of the Lamb is come?" Is it not because now the Accuser of the good is cast out, and the misrule of ungodliness overthrown? Is it not because now the Son of God has appointed "*unto his chosen a kingdom, even as his Father has appointed unto himself?*" Is it not "*because now the kingdom shall be given to his saints,*" and the sacred commission be entrusted to their hands, in the accomplishment of which the world shall resume

its face of joy and peace, and be “*covered with the knowledge of God, even as the waters cover the seas?*” If then the doctrine of Election establish, on the one hand, the righteous SOVEREIGNTY of GOD, does it not, on the other, afford the noblest exhibition of that infinite LOVE, which forming to itself from the mass of the ungodly and the wretched, a *righteous brotherhood*, to be linked in eternal bonds to Christ, sends forth at length that glorified church, armed with the mighty weapons of justice and charity, to subdue the earth, and to banish ungodliness from its intercourse? until “*the desert shall blossom as the rose,*” idolatry be uprooted from the soil, “*the lamb and the wolf lie down together,*” and the righteousness of man be deep and settled as the waveless bosom of the once infuriate ocean!

CHAPTER XII.

THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWISH NATION.

I HAVE mentioned, in the brief view given of the events connected with the second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the ancient people of Judah and Israel would at that time be restored to their own land, and become obedient to the faith of Messiah their King. I beg to offer the following considerations to the mind of the reader, upon the history of that remarkable and proscribed people.

A singular veneration and antiquity belongs to this people. Their history is as a friendly light shining more or less brightly through the dark track of human intercourse, from the fall of Adam to the present time. We cannot, I think, *disconnect* this history with the very first promise of mercy made to mankind. The expression, “*the seed of the woman shall bruise*

the serpent's head," plainly anticipates the existence of that nation from whom the Messiah should come. The future birth of this promised seed consoled the persecuted Abel, and cheered the pious Enoch. The same promise gladdened Noah, the patriarch of two worlds; and while from his heaven-built ark he surveyed the desolation of the earth, taught him to anticipate the more wondrous refuge which he should one day inhabit, "as heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

In the call and faith of Abraham, however, a more marked and distinct commencement appears of that favoured people from whom the promised seed should at length arise. From this time their descent is definite as the children of Abraham. To this their great progenitor God promised a temporal kingdom and heritage in the land of Canaan, but foretold the previous bondage of his descendants during four hundred years in the land of Egypt. As ages rolled on, the prophetic intimations were realized; and at length, under the miraculous guidance of Moses, the Jewish nation came forth as a mighty people whom God had blessed, and took possession of Canaan, the land promised to their fathers. Under this great Deliverer and Lawgiver began the canon of sacred scripture; those living "¹⁵oracles of God," which have

rescued many a benighted soul from the utter ignorance of God, to which sin had reduced them. From this period the Jewish nation claims a pre-eminence over other nations of a very remarkable kind: a pre-eminence, indeed, by no means creditable to themselves, but strikingly illustrative of the grace and munificence of God. While other nations remained utterly ignorant of the true God, the Jews received, through the hands of Moses, statutes, and laws, and ordinances, and judgments of Jehovah. These ordinances, though burdensome to the conscientious, and humiliating to the contrite, were calculated nevertheless to express either by direct intimation or by typical analogy, a future and glorious salvation, which would comprise, *first*, in the long and fearful struggle of the world with evil, the hope and anxieties, the light and the glory of the elect church, both of Jew and Gentile; and *ultimately* the wide diffusion of the same heavenly light over the whole earth, "*when the Sun of Righteousness shall rise with*" unrestricted "*healing in his wings.*"

During the early ages of their national existence God gave them honour, and victory, and establishment in the land of Canaan; and promised the continuance of his protection so long as they were obedient to his word. But this

national covenant they soon and fatally violated. It soon became manifest that no outward advantages can insure a holy practice; that the best laws are comparatively useless to the wicked, and that the richest promises of kindness are in themselves powerless to control the passionate. A fallen nature is a perverted nature. Intemperate desire has taken place of reason. Men are ruled rather by the impulses of passion than by the dictates of intelligence. Detached from the operations of divine grace, superior advantages aggravate rather than diminish evil; as the flash of lightning renders the surrounding darkness the more awfully apparent.

It pleased God frequently to raise up, in the midst of this people, great and noble characters, under whose control occasional reformations took place; but pestilence and famine, captivity and the sword, equally with the benignant interpositions of God, were unable to constrain this people to duty and allegiance; until at length, as the time drew near for the birth of the predicted Messiah, they were finally under bondage to the Roman yoke, and were rapidly approaching to that final catastrophe under which, as a people, they were to be scattered to the four winds of heaven. In the rejection and crucifixion of the incarnate Son of God,

they filled up the measure of their iniquity, and forfeited their commonwealth, their peculiar distinctions, and the costly ceremonials of their religion ; since which period they have roamed the world, a proverb and a bye word—the objects of national scorn, proscription, and violence.

It is however impossible to contemplate the past destiny of this people, without admitting that they form the single bright spot in the dark wilderness of human history. Perverse, ungrateful, rebellious, and corrupt as they have been, yet the religion which they received from God, the miracles which they witnessed in its attestation, and the characters by whom they were occasionally reformed ; these circumstances are the only luminous points in the moral expanse around us. In every other country, while crime has openly pursued the same terrific course, the very *religion* and *philosophy* of the land has *abetted* the fatal triumph. In Judea alone did religion counteract and arrest this triumph. “*The world by wisdom knew not God;*” but it pleased God to manifest his perfections to this people. “*The darkness indeed comprehended not*” the holy light ; but it was nevertheless the light which emanated from the everlasting throne of Jehovah.

The Jewish people became likewise the de-

positories of those wondrous promises, which directed the eyes of the faithful to the great Redeemer of the world : and amidst this people at length the Saviour appeared. He spake among them “as never man spake ;” and ere he died “a ransom for many,” he revealed the will, and vindicated the just authority of God.

But the *rejection* of the Messiah, on the part of the *Jew*, became the era of a large blessing to the *Gentile* world. “*As concerning the gospel,*” observes the apostle Paul, “*they are enemies for your sakes.*” The Jewish nation, during so many ages the favoured and protected people of God, were at length cast out from the place which they had occupied in his church, and their high privileges were transferred to other nations. The partition-wall which had separated the Gentiles and the Jews was now broken down. The Messiah had pointedly declared, “*Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold ; them also I must bring, and there shall be one fold under one shepherd.*” The Jewish nation, in her own ruin and degradation, thus became the occasion of spiritual blessings to the Gentile world. The reign of delusion and idolatry was no longer suffered to maintain an unbroken sway, but Christianity burst forth from the land of Judea to struggle single handed with this mighty empire of evil, and the enmity of

the Jews to Christ became the era of his mercy to the world. “*They were enemies for the sake of the Gentiles.*” “*The natural branches were broken off from the olive tree, and the wild branches were grafted in.*” The mercies of the Lord, so long limited, and so awfully abused by one people, were now made the common property of the nations ; and captive Judah, in the midst of her own calamities, became the source of unrestrained bounty to the earth. And thus while art, philosophy, and eloquence—gifts which have been ever much overvalued as to their actual influence upon human welfare—while *these* may claim a distinct alliance with the triumphs of Greece and Rome—religion, hope, and immortality, belong exclusively to Judah. No permanent blessing has reached the world but through the medium of this singular people. “*Salvation is of the Jews.*” Pardon of sin, the renovation of the heart, the prospects of eternal life—these flow down to us through the Jews ; “*from whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is God over all blessed for ever;*” God incarnate; God the Saviour; “*made of God,*” to every one who believeth, whether Jew or Gentile, “*wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.*”

But if the *past* history of the Jews be thus connected with the welfare of man, *his future*

prospects are yet more intimately blended with the future prospects of Judah. The present condition of the Jews might afford, even to a spectator ignorant of Christianity, many a curious conjecture as to the future. He might well deem it strange, that during a period of eighteen centuries, they should have been wanderers over the world, and never have mingled with the nations among whom they have lived; that they should have adhered, with what might be deemed a hopeless tenacity, to the advent of a victorious Messiah; that they should have clung to the memorials of the past with a force of national feeling, unbroken by the utter desolation of their country, and unshaken alike by their own crimes, or the violence of other nations. That they should have retained, during so many ages, all their peculiarities, and should have lost nothing of their distinctive character amidst all the changes of successive generations, these facts might well excite at least strange speculations with respect to their ultimate destiny as a nation. But to the man acquainted with the records of which they have been ever the jealous guardians—the records which are at once the interpreters of their national disgrace, and the depository of their future hopes—to such a man their ultimate condition is a subject not of *curious conjecture*, but of

certain expectation. Outcast, exiled, degraded as they are, yet are they the objects of a supernatural care ; and are maintained in their present separation from the nations, by the direct providence of God. They bear the stamp of the divine power : they suffer the penalty of the divine law : they realize the prophetic intimations which their own Moses has recorded : and they are carried captive and trodden down of all men, because they rebelled and rejected the councils of the most High.

But the arm which has scattered, will still protect them. The wrath which has visited them is limited, if in its severity, so in its duration. The punishments which have erased the names of other nations from the page of history, still leave their names entire. And for what purpose does this peculiarity accompany every feature of their degradation and their ruin ? Is it not because the hours of their exile are measured out, and the ultimate pardon of their sin is sealed to them by promise ? Is it not because the glory of their restoration shall exceed the glory of their original occupation of the promised land ?

Is not this the reason for their singular and strange existence as a nation ? Is not this the reason why they are "*cast down, but not destroyed :*" "*scattered and peeled,*" and trodden

under foot; but still imperishable amidst all the forms of oppression and violence to which they have been exposed? Like Shadrach and his companions, in a far nobler cause, they have lived in the furnace-flames, and have remained unconsumed. And this, according to the prophetic record, "*When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee. In a little wrath hid I my face from thee, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee.*" (Isaiah xlivi. 2.)

Such is the preservation they experience, and such the promised termination of their rebellion and their sorrow. The hour approaches when, to this exiled nation, the voice of mercy shall be powerfully addressed. "*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people: speak ye comfortably unto Jerusalem. Say unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is forgiven, her sin is pardoned. She hath received of the Lord's hands double for all her sins.*" (Isaiah xl. 1.)

The restoration of this outcast nation appears to be as plainly foretold, as their present degradation and dispersion. The habit, indeed, of affixing an almost exclusively spiritual interpretation to the promises of the Old Testament, connected with Zion, Jerusalem, Judah, and

Israel, has gradually thrown a shade over the future lot of this people, and has rendered the question of a *literal restoration* to their own land, in the minds of many, a subject uncertain and equivocal. I cannot, however, but deem the prophecies connected with Zion and Jerusalem, in the Old Testament, to be, with very few exceptions, applicable *literally* to the Jews. And I fully believe that this proscribed people will return to Zion, when the period of their mercy is arrived, "*with songs of praise, and everlasting joy upon their heads.*"

This expectation is sustained by the strongest evidence which prophecy can afford. Again and again it is declared, that the throne of David, which has been laid so long in ruins, shall be rebuilt; and that Christ shall sit thereon as King and Priest; that, amidst great perturbations and warfare, amidst calamities general and unparalleled in Christendom, the Jewish people shall be brought back from all the captivities wherein they now lie scattered, and shall be converted to the authority of Messiah their Prince; that HE will himself appear miraculously in the midst of them; that the veil which has been spread over their eyes shall be removed; "*that they shall look on him whom they have pierced,*" and shall then become the wondrous monuments of a grace, which

shall have survived the provocations of successive centuries, and shall have taught emphatically the nations, "that God's ways are higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts."

In the day to which the prophecies of God refer, this exiled but recovered people will thus appear "*to have been beloved for the fathers' sakes,*" and to have belonged to that election of grace, whose immutable purpose cannot be broken.

And when thus converted to the knowledge, and governed under the glorious manifestation of the Son of God, they will then become the wide and effective instruments of mercy to the heathen world. Not until the glorified Son of God shall be placed in actual triumph as King, on his throne in Zion, will he receive in its fuller donation, "*the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.*" The Jews will then be among the chosen and honoured instruments of bringing the long desolate heritages of the earth within the sacred culture of the heavenly Husbandman. These restored exiles "*will then be found, as a dew, scattered over all the earth;*" and their recovery to God, and their restoration to Zion, will prove, in their effects upon the world, "*even as life from the dead.*" Then will come

the final blessing of mercy upon the earth ; *then, and not till then*, will the conversion of the earth take place ; and the good seed, which in a wintry time and in a dark hour has been scattered over the nations, spring up to its rich and abundant harvest.

And will not this national revival of Israel and Judah afford the brightest illustration of the divine perfections, and evince to an adoring world, that "*the gifts and calling of God are without repentance?*"

A more important assertion, indeed, than this does not stand recorded on the hallowed page of scripture. It is, in truth, the charter of human felicity ; for, if the favour of God ultimately depended on any other than on his own purpose of grace, would not the hope of its enjoyment die away from the earth ? For what is man in his best estate, but vanity, inconstancy, and guilt ? But God has said, "*I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*" Separate from the mediation of Jesus Christ, this immutability would, indeed, be our death-warrant, and not our reprieve ; but in Christ this immutability is become the charter of our eternal peace : for the dealings of God in Christ are gifts of grace ; and these gifts, and the calling connected with them, "*are without repentance ;*" —repentance, that is, on *the part of God*, who

bestows them. He foresaw, arranged, determined all events, ere he proclaimed his covenant to the world. To Israel, as a nation, he gave the gift of the first-born in his church; and he will not recede from his promise. "*His loving-kindness will he not utterly take from his people.*" "*He will correct them in measure; but not destroy them.*" He chose them, not because they merited his choice; but to manifest in them his own glory. He has cast them off for a time, because his glory required the vindication of its own purity; and he will receive them back because his glory will claim its larger manifestation in the unchangeableness of his promise to their fathers. He will not suffer his name to be polluted. He will evince his wisdom, providence, justice, love, mercy, and faithfulness, in their mingled and eventful history. They are chastised, but still beloved: and when the time of correction has terminated, the time of mercy will commence. A father's bowels will yearn over them: "*the year of the redeemed will come,*" and then it will be distinctly read of all men, as it is now distinctly written in the prophetic volume, "*Oh, Israel, thou shalt never be forgotten of me. I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions as a thick cloud, and as a cloud thy sins. Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee. The mountain shall depart and the hills be*

removed ; but my kindness shall not depart, nor the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

Behold then the goodness and severity of God ! Under his severity to *Israel*, the Gentiles have received mercy ; and they who *had not* heard of mercy, have been elected in Christ to its enjoyment. But behold also the goodness and the *fidelity* of God ! For the veil shall be taken from the eyes of Israel, and the stamp of God be impressed upon their hearts. “*He hath shut them up hitherto in unbelief, that he may at length have mercy upon all.*” “*Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out : for who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor, or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again : for of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever, amen.*” (Rom. xi. 32.)

Christian Reader ! if these things be comprised within the divine record, how intense ought to be the interest which the Gentiles should take in the contemplation of the destiny of *Israel* and *Judah* ! Have not all our past mercies reached us through their instrumentality ? And are not the future hopes of man connected with *their* King, and *their* Deliverer ?

Will the world attain its promised felicity, except in union with their restoration and honour? Well, therefore, may the Gentile direct his anxious eyes towards the light which may seem to fall upon their dark horizon! Well may the Gentile associate with their past and future history, the clearest vindications of the manifold providence of God! Within the boundaries of that providence, he may mark a clemency which no provocation has destroyed, a patience which no successive injuries have outworn; a love, which no ingratitude has diminished; a fidelity, which no inconstancy on their part has induced to waver! He may trace in their *debased* character his *own* guilt; and in the *faithfulness of God to them*, his own asylum and eternal hope.

In man all is wild, irregular, inconstant, polluted; in God all is settled, immutable, pure! Sin has shed, indeed, a deadly blight over the wilderness of earth; and the flowers of paradise have withered and decayed. “*But the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*” THE RESTORER COMETH. “*Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead.*” Christian! the hour of mercy advances in its glad approach! The curse which now lies heavy upon our race, is about to receive its mi-

tigation. The feet of the second Adam shall stand upon the mountains of Israel, paradise be regained, and an incarnate God shall dwell with man ! “ *Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly.*”

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH.

WE have now examined, by the light of scripture, the nature and influence of the millennial **REIGN** of Christ, over a willing and converted world. *Beyond* this point we have little to guide our steps. A brief notice, indeed is given, of a last revival of evil principles, and of a final effort of Satan, “to deceive the nations of the earth.” His power, however, is quickly and miraculously subverted. (Rev. xx.) The second, or general resurrection takes place; and the period of the mediatorial kingdom is terminated by the solemn judgment of the wicked, and by the redemption from sin and death of the righteous, who shall have lived during the millennial reign. “*Then cometh the end: when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even*

the Father ; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. xv. 24.)

These expressions of the apostle mark out the kingdom of Christ to be, in its character, *warlike and victorious* ; a kingdom, in fact, established upon the ruin of antagonist powers, and *then* to terminate *when* those powers shall be destroyed. "*He must reign UNTIL he hath put all enemies under his feet.*" The whole representation of this kingdom is referable to a province of the vast creation of God, agitated by mutiny, anarchy, and crime, but committed to the sceptre of Christ, in order that he may effect its reconciliation, atonement, and ultimate felicity. When this great object shall be accomplished, and this kingdom of righteous coercion and mercy shall be no longer needed, the *sceptre given to Christ to effect this particular object*, will be again laid up in the armoury of heaven, and God will appear to be "*all in all.*"

As a divine person, the second person in the glorious Trinity, the sceptre of Christ is everlasting, and of his kingdom there is no end. It is in

the character of the God-man, the Mediator, the anointed Ruler in the earth, the second Adam, that he is described by the apostle as thus *delivering up* the kingdom to his Father. As Mediator, he had received a work, a commission to fulfil. The *fulfilment* of the commission terminates his kingdom.

It may be here observed, that the incarnation of Christ implies a state of voluntary subjection on the part of Christ. Under this covenant of mercy he became "*obedient unto death.*" This obedience is connected, however, with the *whole* of his mediatorial work. At *no period* of his righteous government, however triumphant, is he ever *independent* of this homage due to God. "**Lo, I COME TO DO THY WILL.**" Hence the expression of the apostle, "*Then SHALL the Son also be subject unto him that put all things under him,*" does not imply any *former* period of *independent* sovereignty *then to terminate its course;* but the expression simply makes out the *distinct* and *perfect* fulfilment of the commission which he had received as the Son of man. It announces, before assembled worlds, the recognition of his Father's authority, and the complete accomplishment of his own mediatorial work. "*I have finished the work thou gavest me to do;*" the earth is at rest, and in this once disturbed scene, as in the other

regions of thy creation, "Thou art all in all!"

This expression of perfect fealty and obedience, conveys, however, no intimation that Jesus Christ, in his glorified humanity, will ever cease to be the elder Brother of his redeemed, "who are bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh." The apostle has distinctly said, "**S**O **SHALL WE EVER BE WITH THE LORD.**" And He himself has bound up his own life with the lives of his redeemed. "**B**ECAUSE **I LIVE, YE SHALL LIVE ALSO.**"

HERE the scriptures close their prophetic notices of the future. The exact employments of eternity ; the regions of happiness which we may be allowed to visit ; the orders of immortal spirits with whom we may be privileged to associate ; the progressive manifestations of power, knowledge, and service, which we may be allowed to receive ; these things are not the subjects of revelation. Here the awful "**drapery**" of the **ETERNAL** spreads out its mysterious folds. But the revelation he has deigned to make, has surely placed us on an elevation where we may well rejoice to plant our steps. "*If eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart, what God hath prepared for his servants,*" yet much he hath indeed "*revealed by his Spirit.*" We anticipate the results

of INCARNATE LOVE to be alike commensurate with HIS generosity, who assumed our nature, and, with the capacities of that nature, which HE deigned to assume. To yonder radiant GLORY, as it rises slowly upon our dim horizon, we may direct our eyes with wonder, gratitude, and joy. And if, in the deeper visions of eternity, yet loftier forms of bliss and knowledge shall elevate their burnished summits, oh ! shall we not meet the progressive dispensation with augmenting praise, and mingle with the adorations of the seraphim, the accents of our eternal thanksgiving !

It is impossible to survey the events of the past, and the prospects of the future, without being struck by the *gradual manner* in which the work of redemption will have realized its hopes to man. Neither circumscribed in wisdom, nor limited in power, nor bounded in benevolence, yet how *slowly* has God effected the purposes of his grace to mankind !

Whatever reasons may sway his infinite mind in this dispensation of his mercy, I seem, at least, to trace throughout the entangled line of events one simple and great design ; the exhibition of CHARACTER ; the exhibition of the ATTRIBUTES OF GOD, and of the WEAKNESS and APOSTACY OF MAN. “ *I the Lord change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*”

"This child is *set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*" "For the Gospel is a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death."

What, let it be asked, is the complexion of human history? Created upright, man could not maintain his allegiance against the snares of pride and sensuality. Driven from paradise, a fugitive and a criminal, he makes no effort to retrace his steps; he manifests neither repentance nor shame. Under his agency the world becomes a moral wilderness; a scene of strife, violence, and blood. A resistless deluge sweeps away the impenitent millions to a common grave. The earth is repeopled; but its principles remain unchanged. Repentance is no feature of the human character. Neither the gathering tempest, nor the bright arch of promise, are effective to intimidate or to allure. A single Nation is *selected* to be the high guardian of better hopes to mankind. A theocracy is its government; miracles are its bulwarks; and the voice of eternal wisdom the oracle of its counsels. *Amidst these advantages*, the human character developed, is that of pride, oppression, licentiousness, and blood. Godliness is despised; its ministers are persecuted; and the senseless IDOL preferred to the living GOD.

Captivity and chains plead his righteous cause; but the stern accents are unheard, or if heard, are resisted and despised. At length the predicted RULER visits his expecting land. His humility disappoints their ambition, his purity disgusts their depravity. They shed his blood; and in severe displeasure they are scattered to the four winds of heaven. During successive centuries of exile, and misery, and scorn, they retain their obduracy, they refuse to learn wisdom. Meantime the church is transferred to the Gentile nations. The paganism of Rome yields to Christian TRUTH; and the INFAMY OF ISRAEL is the theme of Christian lips. Years roll away, and the APOSTACY OF CHRISTENDOM is more fearful than that of Jerusalem. The Vicegerent of Christ assumes the sceptre of temporal power; and, under the semblance of devotion, "*wears out the saints of the most High.*" The dire confederacy of sin is at length dissolved. The Saviour comes to REIGN, where once he came to SUFFER. The Spirit is poured from on high. Satan is driven from the earth; and the religion of Christ is prevalent through the world. "*The knowledge of God covers the earth as the waters cover the seas.*" Again, the depravity of man breaks forth; Satan again deceives the nations. Human nature receives no moral change from time

or *privilege* or *place*. The power of the Messiah terminates the conflict, and presents at length a tranquillized world to God. What, I ask, is this *series of events*, but accumulative attestations to human weakness, apostacy, and crime? What is this history, but development of human CHARACTER under successive conditions of moral advantages, each succeeding condition more favourable to virtue and happiness than the last? But in no condition does man maintain his allegiance, or repose his heart upon GOD.

On the other hand, what is this history on the part of God? Patience, forbearance, compassion, justice, liberality, love, are inscribed in characters of flame upon each succeeding dispensation. We still remark the divine BENEFACTOR educating good out of apparent evil; resolute to bless, and unwearied in his work of grace; exhibiting at the cross the transcendent munificence of LOVE, and the untarnished purity of TRUTH; amidst contending multitudes of the guilty, bringing in a remnant, "according to the election of grace;" educating them, by trials and mercies, to be the spotless BRIDE in the day of the espousals of his incarnate Son; rendering them the hallowed instruments of mercy to mankind; driving, at length, the Usurper from his throne, and offer-

ing unto his Almighty FATHER a world submissive, redeemed, immortal, happy !

What is the wondrous intention of all this intercourse of God with man ? Say, is it not to chain down the eyes of an adoring universe to this TRUTH, now blazoned in imperishable characters upon each successive evolution of human history, that VIRTUE and HAPPINESS are GRATUITOUS BLESSINGS, that OBEDIENCE is the POWER of GRACE, and ETERNAL LIFE the GIFT of GOD, through JESUS CHRIST.

If the foregoing interpretations of scripture be according to the mind and will of God, it will follow that a very considerable error has been entertained in modern days as to the great winding up of the results of Christianity.

These results, as I have before remarked, are looked for in a new scene, to be presented to our view subsequently to the *annihilation of the present earth*. It is imagined that no change will take place in the world different from that which may be effected by the silent progress of knowledge, and the ordinary influence of divine grace; and that the ultimate allotment of happiness and misery will close the existence of the present earthly system.

The view which has been unfolded in the foregoing pages, is opposed to these expectations of the Christian Church, and will clash,

perhaps, even painfully, with the prepossessions of many pious minds. This world has been so long to them a scene of degradation and sin; a valley of bereavement and tears, that they have laboured to detach their best sympathies and affections from its locality, and to associate all their eternal hopes with some distant and glorious abode, to which the term "heaven" continually directs their thoughts.

I should grieve to disturb any habit of quiet and pleasant thought, in any human being, if I did not deem such a habit unauthorised by God's word, and therefore ultimately injurious to the best interests of truth and charity.

The great calamity which the Roman hierarchy has inflicted upon the world, is to have given to the traditions of men a higher practical authority than to the decisions of God. And even in the Protestant churches, the spirit of free enquiry into the import of revealed truth, is sometimes suspected, and becomes the occasion of irritation and jealousy. The tyranny of opinion can sometimes find applause even amidst the strongest claims to the right of private judgment; and hence the humble effort to scrutinize the unfulfilled prophecies of revelation, has occasionally met with a resistance, neither consistent with candour, nor friendly to the real interests of truth. I trust I have

offered my views to the consideration of the reader with Christian humility; and that I have not willingly attempted to put a meaning upon any words of scripture which they will not in fairness allow; and I would still remember, in reference to the opinions of others, the striking remark of Locke: “He that attacks received opinions with any thing but *fair arguments*, may be justly suspected *not to mean well*, nor to be led by the love of truth; but *the same may be said of him* who so defends them. An *error* is not the *better* for being *common*, nor *truth* the *worse* for having *lain neglected*.” His subsequent remark is melancholy, and yet I feel it to be just: “And if it were put to the vote, anywhere in the world, I doubt, as *things are managed*, whether truth would have the majority—at least whilst the *authority of men*, and not the *examination of things*, must be its measure.”

To mistake the meaning of God’s word in any point, cannot in the end be favourable to our happiness, however agreeable may be the conjectures which we may have substituted for God’s decisions. His truth must ever be identical with our real welfare. The statement, that *heavenly happiness* is a felicity to be enjoyed in a renovated earth, may clash with some violence against the favourite associations of our

youth and our age ; and yet, nevertheless, it may be a truth connected with the highest manifestations of the divine glory.

With kindness and much diffidence I would suggest to those who *may be painfully* affected by the idea of a *restored*, rather than of a *destroyed* world, the enquiry whether their repugnance may not be less *spiritual* than they are disposed to imagine it to be ; and whether their notions of "heaven" may not, in a *figurative* sense, be in fact more *earthly* than the notions from which they shrink ? Is this repugnance derived from views of the divine glory, or from views interwoven with many a cherished notion of their own happiness ? And would the realization of the "will of God on *earth* as in heaven," shock a disinterested zeal for his glory, or oppose rather the long-cherished expectation of meeting salvation in a region severed altogether from the scenery of this ? And if it could be shown that the *honour* of Christ may be connected with the *removal* of evil rather than with the *demolition* of the *place* on which it has been nurtured and matured, would they cheerfully yield the theory on which their habits of thought have been formed ?

Is not, besides, an attachment merely *local* a depressing principle of human action ? Ought it to compose a *large* part of our notions of eternal

felicity? Is a bright and fair scene of *external* peace, in some distant and unimagined world, the only legitimate notion of heaven? Is not *godliness* a higher principle than *local aversion* or *local attachment*? Ought not our notion of heaven to be connected rather with the honour of God—with the manifestation of truth—with the service of Christ—with conformity to his will—with union to his person and cause?

To be *with him*; to be made *like* him; to live in his full and eternal fellowship; to be employed in his work; never more to grieve his kind and pure spirit; to behold his glory; to attain the **ONENESS** for which he prayed; a oneness with himself, and a oneness with his people; to mark his triumph in the destruction of natural and moral evil; to see the rich harvest of redemption waving, in a world once barren through sin, and accursed through rebellion; to witness the contrast between revolt and allegiance; between tears and death on the one hand, and joy and immortality on the other; to witness this contrast on one and the same theatre of action; to connect this victory with the wonders of incarnate love; to mark the **CROWN** upon **HIS** head who fought single-handed in this mysterious conflict; to be ourselves associated in his conquest; to *hear* and to *partake* that accordant song of praise in the

presence of him to whom it refers, “*unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us KINGS and PRIESTS unto God and his father, unto him be glory and blessing and honour;*” Oh! can we want a higher notion of heaven, or form a higher estimate of happiness and joy? Where is rest, where is peace, where is joy, if not in the presence of the Lamb and upon the actual theatre of his sufferings and his triumph? Are not a BRIDAL CHURCH and a RENOVATED EARTH, the full fruit of “the travail of his soul, with which HE will be satisfied?” And if HE be satisfied, say, shall his ransomed saints repine?

It is not a novel sentiment, that “*the mind is its own place,*” and surely it is a more spiritual notion, than to locate heaven of necessity in some distant and higher region; higher perhaps only in our own imaginations, and because removed from the scenery of earth. Should we not do well to consider heaven rather as a *state of character*, than as a mere region of enjoyment? as a *condition of mind*, than as a *local separation* from the material structure of the present world? “*In me ye shall have peace.*” If then the feet of Emanuel shall yet rest on earth, shall we wish a loftier joy than *there* “to walk with him,” and *there* to contemplate the mani-

festations of his grace in the renewal and felicity of a once disordered world ?

The conviction has fastened strongly upon my mind, that the honour of our blessed Lord and Master is connected, in a peculiar manner, with this renovation of the earth. HERE he endured shame, and here satan has reigned. But the CROWN belongs to CHRIST, and the KINGDOM shall be HIS. To this fact surely all the prophecies of the *Old* Testament direct our views ; and every delineation of happiness which lies depicted upon the pages of the *New* Testament, borrows all its imagery and derives all its locality from the EARTH on which we dwell. Every blessing, indeed, originates with God, and is dependent upon a *spiritual* energy, but the scene on which it operates is this material world. These blessings concentrate their mighty influences to overthrow idolatry, superstition, misrule, sin, and death. They are connected with the KINGLY POWER of CHRIST. They assure us of his conquest, and invite the EARTH to rejoice before her GOD. THE CITY, “ *built of God*,” and anticipated by those “ *who have died in faith*,” “ *COMES DOWN from heaven*,” and expands its splendour upon the scenery of earth. The closing pages of Revelation replace, indeed, our exiled feet in the same

paradise from which Adam had been driven forth a wanderer and a criminal. I would venture, in fine, to ask with confidence, whether any other felicity than the unbroken dominion and blessed presence of Christ upon the EARTH, be recorded as a source of expectation amidst the prophetic pages of scripture ?

I renew my request to the Christian reader, to weigh these subjects with impartiality, and to conduct every examination in a spirit of humility and prayer.

It may, perhaps, facilitate the apprehension of the foregoing statements, to connect them with the two following considerations :---

First, that the reign of Christ and the risen saints does by no means *limit* their abode to the *surface* of the earth, over which they will be commissioned to rule. The scene presented to the eye of the servant of Elisha may seem to the mind in illustration of this idea. He beheld, in the *regions of the air*, ““ chariots of fire and horses of fire.””

It may not be improbable, that these regions, purified from the rebel hosts which now occupy them under ““ the prince of the power of the air,”” will afford a local dwelling to the redeemed, and that from thence they may descend in fulfilment of the beneficent office

assigned to them on the earth, either to mingle *visibly* or *invisibly* among those whose welfare and virtue they will rejoice to promote.

Secondly, that although this earth, during the millennial period, and yet more gloriously after the final judgment of the wicked, will be a scene of happiness and perfect order, it may not however be the *exclusive* region of the felicity of redeemed man.

As the birth-place of the son of David, the scene of his agonies, conquest, and exaltation, we may suppose a special honour to be ever connected with it. Out of seeming weakness, the power of divine wisdom rises into its justest magnitude and into its highest strength. This world, a diminutive portion of the vast creation, will have afforded to angels and to archangels, the loftiest displays of the attributes of God. **THE CROSS OF CALVARY IS PERHAPS THE HIGHEST THRONE OF JEHOVAH'S GLORY.**

This world, limited then as it is in its material dimensions, may yet be a structure peculiarly dear to beings more exalted than its own inhabitants. Shall such a scene, rescued from the assaults of evil, adorned with new beauty, the birth-place of the Redeemer, the radiant theatre of his beneficent forbearance, compassion, and grace, be blotted from exist-

ence, and draw forth, by its fall, a shout of malignant joy, if even *malignant* joy can be felt in the regions of despair ?

Do the ever-living oracles thus announce its fatal hour of doom ? Other accents, I confess, seem to rest upon my listening ear, when addressed by those voices of wisdom and of truth ! They seem to tell me "*there shall be no more curse:*" "*the Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice!*"

But is it necessary to *circumscribe* the exercise of human power and bliss in its glorified condition to this earth, fair and beautiful as it will have then become ? May not the glorified saints range with happy eagerness through unnumbered regions of tranquillity and joy ? and amidst heavenly dominions and societies, of which now they can form no definite conceptions, receive continual accessions of knowledge and felicity, and expand their noblest faculties in the progressive sun-light of God's countenance for ever and ever ?

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

HAVING briefly placed before the view of the reader the outline of those great events which lie depicted on the map of prophecy ; the subversion of the powers of evil, and the introduction of the peaceful reign of Christ, it becomes an enquiry of very direct and practical interest, whether we can ascertain, by any accredited marks, the place which the *present time* may occupy in this extended chart of the future ? Borne forwards, as vessels, upon the wide ocean of human life, can we calculate with any thing like accuracy, the longitude of our own position, and ascertain the distance which may yet intervene between us and the land we desire to reach ?

“ *The times and the seasons*” are in the hands of God ; and it becomes us to bow with rever-

rence to the mysterious allotments of his providence. But if these allotments be more or less wrapped up in mystery, He, who in remoter ages thought fit to conceal them, as they *approach* the era of their accomplishment, can as easily reveal them. And if, on the one hand, it be possible with rash and arrogant resolve, to pre-determine the course of prophetic events, and thus to substitute human interpretation for divine admonition, it is as possible to remain in *culpable* ignorance of those signs and intimations which God has been pleased to make of his will and ways. Our Lord complained of the men of his day, that they could discover the "signs of the seasons," but were willingly blind to the more important "signs of the times."

In the elucidation of this part of our subject, I desire to speak with the utmost caution. I desire to take no one step beyond the barrier-line which God has drawn between ignorance and knowledge; and I would press upon my own heart, and upon that of the reader, that *duties* are ours while *events* are God's; that whatever be the prospect before us, either of *distance* or of *nearness* to the great winding up of this chequered system, that we have at least a plain and unembarrassed path to pursue—

the *fulfilment of the daily work assigned us*, and the *patient expectation* that in his *own time and way*, our Lord and Master *will at length appear*.

With these feelings, I would offer a few considerations in reference to the chronology of the period in which we live ; or which is the same thing, upon the date which the Scriptures assign to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The reader will recollect the visions made to Daniel, and the four successive monarchies which they foretell. He will recollect, that both these visions agree in the same succession of four monarchies, and that the last monarchy, in the course of its duration, is to be broken into ten parts or independent sovereignties ; and that *in the days of these kings will the God of heaven (Daniel ii.) set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed* ; or, in similar terms, that at this time, “ *the saints of the Most High will take the kingdom.*” (Daniel vii.)

The second advent of Christ will thus take place *during the divided state of the Roman empire*. Under this assurance, it would seem evident, that no fifth prolonged despotism, similar to those of Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome, will appear in the political history of man ; but

that the kingdom of Christ will be erected upon the ruins of *the existing relics of the divided Roman empire.*

2. But as these sovereignties may run on to an unlimited duration, the *actual* period of the Messiah's kingdom would still remain a matter of vague conjecture. We find, therefore, other marks which contract the range of our enquiry, within limits far more definite and precise.

The second vision revealed to Daniel, (ch. vii.), foretells the existence of an *eleventh power* or horn, which, springing up within the ten divided sovereignties, and assuming a *spiritual despotism*, *will think* “*to change times and laws, and to wear out the saints of the Most High.*” This baleful despotism is to continue during a period called “*a time and times and the dividing of time,*” (Dan. vii. 25,) at the end of which period, “*the judgment will sit and the kingdom be given to the people of the saints.*”

If we refer to the vision of the madness and dethronement of the Chaldean king, (Dan. iv. 16,) we shall find the duration of that insanity and dethronement to be called “*seven times.*” We can, I think, scarcely hesitate to call these “*seyen times,*” *seven years;* and hence to conclude that the “*wearing out of the saints*” by the spiritual power, will continue, during three

years and a half, for “*a time, times, and dividing of time.*” But we interpret these *years* to be *prophetic years*, that is, each year to contain 360 days of years; a day for a year; and thus these years, $360 \times 3 + 180$, are equal to 1260 days or prophetic years. We have authority to make this interpretation, in the usage of scripture: thus, (Numb. xiv. 33.) *Your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness, after the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years.* This interpretation is further strengthened, indeed I think placed beyond a reasonable doubt, by the reference made to the *same events* under expressions of time similar in duration, though different in name. Thus, in the book of Revelations, (ch. xi. 2,) the court of the mystic temple and the holy city is given to be trodden under foot of the gentiles, *forty and two months*, $42 \times 30 = 1260$ days; and the witnesses of God are to prophesy “*in sackcloth a thousand two hundred and three score days.*” In a similar manner (Rev. xii. 14.) the persecuted woman, the mystic church, is driven into the wilderness, that she should be nourished “*for a time, times, and half a time.*” Now, the events foretold under the expressions, “*wearing out the saints of the*

Most High," "*the witnesses clothed in sackcloth*," "*the holy city trodden under foot*," and the "*woman driven into the wilderness*," are all connected together. They contain internal evidence which identifies them at once, to every student of prophecy, as the period during which the true church will be depressed in the world, or, like its divine Author, "*be despised and rejected of men*." No reasonable doubt, I imagine, can remain upon the mind as to the *same-ness* of the period connected with these events, and expressed by the equivalent terms, "*time, times, and dividing of time*," "*forty-two months*," "*1260 days*." We have, therefore, this index or chronological sign to add to the former; that while the kingdom of Christ will subvert the kingdoms of *the broken Roman empire*, it will manifest this conquest at *the end of a period of 1260 years of ecclesiastical persecution*. If then we can ascertain the *termination* of this period of persecution, we shall ascertain the *commencement* of the kingdom of the Messiah. As my object in this "*brief enquiry*" is, however, to illustrate the great principle of retributive justice and glory to the Son of man upon this EARTH, on which he was dishonoured, rather than to examine the *details* of prophetic intimations, I shall only refer the reader in very general terms, to the history of the Church of

Christ, in connexion with the persecutions of the papal despotism.

It is then a matter of history, that the Pope of Rome, in the year 533, received a grant from Justinian, who then swayed the imperial sceptre, which constituted him the first or universal bishop of the Christian church. (Vide Cunningham on the Apocalypse, p. 199.)*

* I would suggest to the reader, that the period 533, here assigned to be the *commencement* of the 1260 years of spiritual despotism, need not imply that the *zenith* of Papal power and misrule had *then* arrived. The awful apostacy *began* in fact during the days of the apostles, and did not reach its height until a much later period of modern history than 533. It is however, no where stated in scripture, that the 1260 years are to be calculated from the period of *maturity* in Papal guilt. If we deem "the judgment to consume and to destroy," to have begun its retributive work in 1792, and then *retrace* the course of 1260 years, we come to the year 533, which year is characterised by the *first authoritative* effort to give *supremacy* to the see of Rome, a circumstance surely sufficiently marked to constitute the commencement of a despotism which should *hereafter wear out* the saints of God. That this supremacy should not be *at once received* by the Papacy; that a succeeding Pope should even denominate him who should use the title to be antichrist, does not appear to me to place any difficulty in the way of assigning the grant of Justinian, as the date of the sanguinary despotism of Rome. The domination rapidly matured, but this was the *first tangible demonstration* of its existence. We have at least this *extraordinary fact* before us; a course of 1260 years lying between *two events*, the *grant*, though it be but

From that time, the avarice, ambition, and secularity of the Roman see, gradually developed its refined and deadly policy, and evinced a spirit of more fatal and unrelenting persecution than had ever been exhibited under a pagan sceptre. This despotism, expanding more or less its exterminating schemes, during a dark period of 1260 years, and dating its origin in the year 533, brings us down to the remarkable era of 1792. The strange and fearful revolution which the condition of the papal church experienced at that time, is thus luminously stated by the writer on the Apocalypse to whom I have already referred.

"Until the French Revolution," this writer observes, "the papal power, notwithstanding the partial resistance which it experienced from some of the sovereigns of Europe, continued, throughout all the central territories of the Roman empire of the west, to hold the saints in subjection. Neither in Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, or Savoy, were the protestants tolerated; and the only part of what may be considered a central part of the western empire, where toler-

nominal, of *supremacy*, and the awful *judgment* which stript the see of Rome of power, splendor, and respect. Is not then this interpretation *derived* from *history*, and not from *speculation*? Properly, does it not refer to *fulfilled*, rather than *unfulfilled prophecy*?

ation existed, was in some of the cantons of Switzerland. Previously to the French Revolution, therefore, it is plain, ‘that the judgment had not begun to sit’ in order to take away the dominion of the papacy. Europe appeared to slumber in perfect security; the protestant faith had lost much ground since the period of the Reformation, nor did there appear any prospect of its regaining what was lost. Indeed, England was the only kingdom of the ancient Roman empire which had wholly embraced the Reformation, and destroyed the papal authority within its dominions.

“But at the fall of the French monarchy in 1792, a series of events began, which have, in the space of twenty-five years, shaken to its foundation the spiritual power of the papacy throughout the greatest part of the western empire. *The monastic orders have been annihilated, the property of the church confiscated, the tithes abolished, many spiritual principalities have been secularized, and in France, the Netherlands, and every part of Germany, the protestants have, by the new constitution of these kingdoms, obtained not only a complete toleration, but an equal admission to offices of public trust with their catholic fellow-subjects.*

“These events seem to afford decisive evidence, that ‘judgment to consume and destroy the do-

minion' of the papacy '*began to sit*' at the fall of the French monarchy in 1792; and consequently, that the 1260 years *have elapsed*; for, as the protestants are now tolerated in the central countries of the western empire, the period during which the saints and times and laws of the church, were to be delivered into the hand of the papacy, is *evidently past*, and from what has been said before, it could only have elapsed at the time of the French Revolution.

" It is also agreeable to the analogy of the divine government, that wicked men should be made use of as instruments for the demolition of the power of the papacy; and this has been the case, in a very remarkable manner in the present period. The persons who successively were invested with the imperial power in France, from the fall of the monarchy till the restoration of the ancient family, may be considered in the light of public executioners, to whom a work of wrath was committed. They have most awfully fulfilled their commission. But the judgment is still '*sitting*,' and we must patiently wait to see the end. The period in which we live is pregnant with events of the most stupendous nature; and if we may judge of the future by the past, the astonishing celerity with which events have succeeded each other,

serves to show that the utter end of the papal dominion is not distant.

“ It is indeed true, that the course of things since the overthrow of the late French empire, seems at first view to indicate that the power of the papacy is recovering its ascendancy. The order of the jesuits has been re-established by a papal bull, and the pope has recovered his *temporal* possessions. But still all these efforts made to prop up a falling edifice, may be fitly compared to the labours of children to give solidity to houses built with sand.” (Vide Cunningham on the Apocalypse, p. 210.)

I feel unable to refuse my assent to the opinion here given, *that the tremendous attack* made upon the Roman church at the French Revolution, is quite *incompatible* with the notion of a *dominant* condition. Can the overthrow of the monastic orders, the plunder of church property, the destruction of religion by legislative enactment, and the massacre of a hundred thousand of her clergy, be *consistent* with any reasonable *estimate of domination and power?* Under such a terrific judgment upon the persecutor, can we refuse to admit that the period of the fatal twelve hundred and sixty years has terminated its course ? If then the *division* of the Roman monarchy into ten sovereign-

ties marks out the *general era* in which the kingdom of the Messiah is to be established, the termination of the twelve hundred and sixty years gives a more *specific date* to the *time* of its *commencement*. And should the blow already given to the Papal power be *correctly* deemed *incompatible* with its long-established domination, then is the probability even *great* that within the limit of another generation “the sign of the Son of Man” may appear in the heavens, and the redemption of his Church be revealed.

This popular view of the chronology of the present time may be confirmed by a reference to the numbers mentioned in the last chapter of the prophet Daniel, (Dan. xii. 6.) *And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried;*

but the wicked shall do wickedly : and none of the wicked shall understand ; but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate be set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five-and-thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be : for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot in the end of the days.

To Daniel, the mystery of iniquity which he had foretold, was wholly inexplicable. It was sufficient to him, to be made the medium of a revelation to the Church. To him the *vision was sealed*. But, *at the end of the time*, the words are to be *unclosed*; and *the wise are to understand*. On *our view* the historical annals of revolving centuries have shed their bright and steady light. Before *our view*, the four predicted monarchies have unfolded their successive existence. Before *our view*, the last monarchy has crumbled into its ten predicted sovereignties : the eleventh power of persecution has arisen to accomplish its fatal period of twelve hundred and sixty years, and has at length received its apparent death-blow from the hands to which it had once imparted strength. These *facts* are at least recorded before us. May not then this be the time of wisdom ? may not “*the wise*,”

the pious, the faithful, the humble, be privileged at length to understand the mercy which God has laid up in store for his people? May not *two* out of the *three* periods of Daniel have fulfilled their day? The three periods are “the time, times, and half:” the “twelve hundred and ninety days,” and “the thirteen hundred and thirty-five days.” If these several periods *begin* their date together, and if the first period, the “time, times, and half,” ran out its course in the year 1792, then is also the period of *twelve hundred and ninety years* elapsed; six years besides are elapsed of the additional *forty-five years*; and thus *thirty-nine future years* may commence the *time of blessedness* to which Daniel is referred; when his nation shall be restored, *himself shall stand in his lot*, and “*the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.*”

Do not these indications of the will of God, these chronological SIGNS, appear to place the subject upon a firm basis? Is this conjecture? is it not rather an *induction* of past events, derived from history, as interpreted by the word of God? It is no *dream*, that four monarchies have in succession displayed their strength; that the last has been broken into ten leading sovereignties—that an eleventh power “*diverse from the rest,*” has put forth a character of dominion

which enforces its stern edicts even over the regions of the intelligence and the affections—which has rendered void, by its traditions, the commands of God, and “worn out the servants of the Most High.” Thus far the subject belongs to *recorded facts*—to prophecies *fulfilled*, not conjectured. It is no *dream*, that twelve hundred and sixty years of this despotism have “fulfilled their tardy and disastrous course,” and that the judgments have fallen upon the persecutor. This is no speculation. These facts are plain and palpable ; and all this fulfils the text of the divine record ; and *subsequently* to these events, is not the kingdom of the Son of God *shortly to be revealed?* Let the reader weigh these circumstances, and let him attempt in prayer, and with candour, to *put his own value upon these signs of the times.*

3. But there are *corroborative* and *attendant* intimations of prophecy. If the Papal power is to be the object of this awful judgment, so likewise are the nations associated with its iniquity : “*Ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars.*” “*Immediately after the tribulations of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.*” (Matt. xxiv. 39.) “*The day of the Lord cometh, and it is nigh at hand ; a day of darkness and of gloominess ; a day of clouds and thick*

darkness." " *Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision, for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall rise out of Sion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall be shaken. But the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.*" (Joel ii. iii.) How terrible are the political convulsions which these august emblems portray to our view ! And can we deny to have seen the first act at least gone through of this fearful drama ? Have not the sorrows of the nations, during a quarter of a century previous to the existing peace, been such as to astonish and confound mankind ? Have not the ancient landmarks of distinction been cast down ? the thrones of power been subverted ? and the soil of the Roman earth been soaked with human blood ? And though a return to former political habits and relations be now expected by many, who in this may perhaps misconstrue the symptoms of the times, yet at least the storm which they imagine to be dying away, *has been loud and long.* The warning voice of judgment has uttered accents of at least mysterious and unwonted strength.

4. It was declared by the Son of God, that "*before the end come, the gospel (Matt. xxiv. 14) of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.*" May I not assert

this declaration to have been fulfilled, in a remarkable manner, since that revolution of anarchy and impiety which levelled every sacred institution in the dust, and which appeared to be even as the convulsive death-throe of Christianity in the central part of the Roman world? At the very moment when infidelity calculated, as if a moral eclipse, the age and day of its utter ruin, it pleased God to put a special honour upon his gospel—so that the scriptures have been placed before the notice of the whole papal earth, while their sound is going forth amidst every heathen nation. But to the *papal world*, at least, this gospel is at this moment fulfilling the solemn office of a witness—of a witness on the *part of Christ*—inviting the guilty, and the wretched, to fasten their wearied hopes at length upon the coming glories of his kingdom—of a witness also *on the part of that misguided and cruel church*, that she is practically resolute to trample beneath her feet the hallowed records of mercy and truth; and to hold up to contempt as the most *pestilent heresy*,* “the right to feed upon immortal truth,” and “to lay hold” upon the eternal promises of God!

5. Another sign illustrative of the present

* I refer expressly to the Papal bull addressed to Poland, in reference to Bible societies, in which the Christian effort to diffuse the Scriptures is called a pestilent heresy.

æra, is the *advance of human science*, and the *practical rejection* of the presiding wisdom of revelation. How fearful is the manifestation of this truth in the current history of legislation and commerce. In the views of those who guide the helm of nations, or who traffic largely in the merchandize of knowledge, and who speculate upon the progress of political and commercial science, how fearful is the total absence of practical *godliness*. Where is any reference to God, to the decisions of his will, to the wisdom of his counsels, to the results of his grace, to the happiness of his service ? While ecclesiastical establishments connect Christianity nominally with each throne and altar, where is its *control* of power, and its *use* of riches, and its *estimate* of good and evil ? The gospel *tells* not upon the public practice of life. It is utterly overlooked, and an intellectual paganism has virtually usurped its place in the great system of European politics. The *sufficiency of science* is the *idol* before which men of all ranks bow down. Knowledge is accounted the mighty instrument which is to snap asunder the bonds under which the weak have long been slaves to the strong ; the guide which is to lead the wanderer into a path of safety and repose ; the legislator, which is to realise the true balance of power, and to arrange the dis-

ordered system of international converse. The wisdom of God is rejected ; and the authority of Christ is held to be a ceremony and a name. Are not, I ask, the prophetic scriptures at this moment receiving their awful accomplishment ? (Rev. xvi. 13.) Are not *three master principles* of human action at this moment expanding through Europe, each one his attributes of fearful strength, at length to come into conflict with each other, and all with the wisdom of the gospel ? I mean the Spirit of Despotism, the Spirit of Infidel Science, and the Spirit of Superstitious Theology ? Is not the vast population of the European commonwealth enlisted under these several banners ? And though the collision of these mighty sects may be delayed for a few years, is not the concussion likely, at length, to upheave the bulwarks of human society, and to teach the world one more terrific lesson, ere God be proclaimed supreme, and Messiah his anointed ruler in the earth ? The principles of philosophy may *convulse*, but they cannot *heal* the world. The legislation of science or of superstition will, at length, be as the palsied hand of the magician before the living strength of the prophet of Israel. But amidst the agonizing calamities induced by infidel sufficiency, the cheering truth will unfold its imperishable characters,

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

5. The preparations for the return of the outcast nation of Israel, is another sign of the times. “*Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled.*” “The times of the Gentiles” are evidently the times of the four monarchies, *until the kingdom becomes that of Christ*—and is there not a movement which is felt more or less throughout the earth in reference to this exiled people? And is it not remarkable that a missionary from that nation has already proclaimed, in the streets of Jerusalem, the gospel of Christ to his injured kindred in blood and in faith?

6. The last symptom which I shall name as marking out the present æra, is the unusual determination of the dominant nations of Europe *to maintain the mutual relations of peace.* Surely there is a meaning in this which lies not upon the surface of existing circumstances. The exhaustion induced by warfare may be its apparent cause; but, perhaps, a holier purpose on the part of God may be its true solution. (Rev. vii. 2.) “*And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt*

not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Men may despise the servants of Christ, but God hath loved them, yea, with an everlasting love. His eye is upon the remnant of the election of his grace, and by the effective energies of his Spirit will they be sealed as his property for ever. How wide now the efforts to proclaim the liberty of Christ to the captive sons of men. If the voices of human science are uttering loud *their* unhallowed accents, so also is the gospel telling its simple tale for the obedience and joy of faith.

These various signs identify, I think, the present hour to be the hour of approaching mercy to the church, and of destruction to its foes. Reader, I offer these thoughts to your candid scrutiny. I may be in error, but *the word of God is true.* Search, then, and prove the truth, and abide by the decisions of the Almighty.

CHAPTER XV.

THE INSENSIBILITY OF THE WORLD TO THE WARNING VOICE OF CHRIST.

IF the prospect of the future be bright and consolatory to the true Christian, so ought it to be dark and oppressive to the unbelieving and the impenitent. The glory of God will receive its twofold manifestation in the awards of justice, and in the gifts of mercy. The time of VINDICATION will realize its prophetic existence. During many a long year the name of Christ has afforded occasion to the exercise of mockery, contempt, and superstition. Recognized in the theory of human societies, whether political or ecclesiastical, He is practically despised; and the principles of worldly policy supersede his councils, and nullify his decisions. The majority of nominal Christians are utterly careless of their responsibility to his tribunal; and expect the course of the world still to proceed in

the same manner as it has done from age to age. In vain the scriptures announce a limited period to the forbearance of God; in vain they call for repentance, and faith, and godliness; in vain they proclaim "*a day in which God will judge the world in righteousness*" by that august Ruler "*whose goings forth are from everlasting*;" "*whereof God hath given the assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead.*" A deathlike torpor and incredulity rests upon the human soul, and all the judgments and mercies of the Almighty make no impression. In private life tear chases tear, and death succeeds to death; but no man learns wisdom save the despised saint whom God deigns to enlighten and to heal. In public life, wars and commotions, pestilence and earthquake, anarchy and blood, attest, during successive centuries, the controversy which God has with national impiety; but national reform, humiliation, and godliness, are conditions of public life unfelt, unseen, contemned! If there be a zeal for social rights—for mental freedom—for commercial greatness—for intellectual progress; it pauses short of the claims of God. Secularity pollutes the church; and while civil policy expands the enactments of legislation to the *multiplied* interests of the citizen, it contracts their influence over the acknowledged rights of

God. On this theatre of human action, man is every thing, God is nothing. His name indeed is upon the tongue, and his authority is registered upon the page of the public liturgy ; but his will, his decisions, his warnings, and his promises are matters of cold speculation or of occasional excitement. In the day of sorrow, sickness, or death, there may be a transient reference to his mercy ; but it is the refuse offering which the world will no longer ask for nor receive.

The approaching day of account ; the government of the world in the hands of Christ ; the results of his incarnation ; his connexion with mankind ; the responsibility to HIM, incurred by talent, wealth, influence, rank, and power ; these ideas are rejected as illiberal, onerous, and enthusiastic. The secondary interests of man chase away his primary necessities from his sight, and three score years of life are preferred to eternity. The care of the body is preferred to that of the soul ; and the applause of man is deemed a brighter heritage than the enduring approbation of God.

It appals the thoughtful mind to contemplate the fearful upshot of this state of human things. The day of God approaches ; but where is the preparation for his advent ?

When our Almighty Redeemer foretold his

return in glory to the world, in which previously he had been rejected, he announced the very manifestation which we witness, of this incredulity and contempt : “*As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be : for as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark ; and knew not until the flood came and took them all away : so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.*” The flood came upon the world unexpected, though the theme of incessant prediction. During one hundred and twenty years did the warning voice of God utter its mournful accents, and intreat a cessation in the work of ungodliness and sin. The accents were scattered to the desert air ; they reached no rebel heart of man. The shortness of time, the approach of death, the brooding darkness of the gathering storm, interrupted not the career of sensuality, the progress of licentiousness, or the noise of mirth. *They eat, they drank ; “the harp, and the viol, and the tabret, and melody were in their feasts : ”* they formed alliances ; they built up many a domestic dwelling-place ; they coveted individual and national renown ; but “*they regarded not the work of the Lord,*” nor knew “*the operation of his hands.*” They ridiculed the prophetic re-

cord. They smiled in idle scorn, while the Prophet built and surveyed his ark, the appointed refuge from the approaching wrath! But the insensibility of man delayed not the purpose of God ; the neglected warning cancelled not the recorded verdict ; the mirth of the criminal arrested not the hand of the judge ; the horizon blackened ; the tempest burst ; and the human population lay buried beneath the waves !

And so shall it be; we are told, by infallible authority, in the last judgments of the great day. The same insensibility ; the same licentiousness ; the same preference of sensual to spiritual joy ; the same complacency in ungodly gratifications ; the same oblivion of justice and mercy ; the same contempt of divine law, and attachment to human schemes, will characterize the period of time, proximate to the second advent of Christ, as characterized the period antecedent to the terrific flood of Noah. It would be an awful employment to pourtray to the mind, with any thing like historical accuracy, the tremendous alarm which must at length have seized upon the world, when the threatened judgment actually commenced ; when the torrents of the skies and the tides of the ocean united their fearful strength ; and by successive ravages marked out a storm unlike

the wintry desolations of other years; a storm directed by the same Almighty hand which hitherto had restrained the furious elements, and made them subservient to human welfare. Creative power was now charged with retributive indignation, and the arm of God had shattered the schemes of man! The business of earth at length paused; the din of pleasure ceased; the strife of individuals was suspended; the politics of nations were arrested; all classes of society mingled together, appalled by a common ruin; the landmarks of property were annihilated; armies were useless; wealth was a name; and science a delusion. The avenging scourge of Omnipotence passed over the whole earth, and no criminal remained behind to tell the tale. Conviction came too late; remorse could be no substitute for repentance. The hour for contrition was for ever elapsed.

And to this scene of utter disaster the Redeemer refers, in order to illustrate the consternation which will arrest an impenitent world, when he shall RETURN to the EARTH on which he has been so long despised.

Whether, therefore, the prophetic *interpretations* which we have attempted to give, be *correct* or *incorrect*, the day of his advent *will* arrive, and who may abide his anger? Insensibility and scorn will characterize human so-

ciety. The voice which warns will excite contempt; the hand which points, not in anger but in love, to predicted judgment, will be met by no friendly eye. The business, pleasure, gains, and philosophy of life, will occupy the world, until the sign of the Son of man shall appear in the heavens, and the authority of Christ allow of scorn no more. It were fearful to pourtray that final alarm which will overwhelm a guilty world, when, too late for refusal, the cup of trembling is held to its lips!

The destruction and calamities of the last days "of the times of the Gentiles," are delineated on the page of scripture with a force and energy calculated to shake to the foundation the strongest confidence of the world. But the men of this world will not read; they will not listen; they pursue the game of life, and sport upon the precipice of perdition!

True religion is despised, and the authority of the son of God is forgotten. But the obduracy of man cannot invalidate the claims of God. The records of the Omniscient no human hands can erase; resisted or received, they hasten to their accomplishment. Would to God that the great and rich of the earth, the wise, and the intelligent—the princes, and the prelates, the nobles, and the clergy of every land—would

that all to whom God has entrusted the use of power, and influence, and eloquence, and wealth; might remember the condition of man, and the tribunal before which he must stand. And would that the mingled multitudes doomed to toil and obscurity and penury, might alike receive the message of the eternal word. Would that if any human being hitherto occupied but with the details of earth, should scan these feeble lines, that he might hear the warning voice, and remember the Saviour of whom it speaks! Painful is it to think, of a ruin which no human skill can avert, of a degradation which no art of man can reclaim, of “a waste” for which no “after-thrift” can atone!

“Come near, ye nations, to hear ; and hearken, ye people ; let the earth hear, and all that is therein ; the world and all things that came forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon ALL NATIONS, and his fury upon all their armies. He hath utterly destroyed them ; he hath delivered them to the slaughter ; their slain shall be cast out ; the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll : and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven. For it is the day of the LORD’s vengeance, and the year of recompences for the con-

troversy of Zion, and the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall be burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day ; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever : from generation to generation it shall lie waste ; none shall pass through it for ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it ; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it ; and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing, and thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles, and brambles, in the fortresses thereof. There shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate. Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and READ, no one of these shall fail ; none shall want her mate. For my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.” (Isaiah xxxiv.)

“*WHOSO IS WISE WILL PONDER THESE THINGS, AND HE SHALL UNDERSTAND THE LOVING KINDNESS OF THE LORD.*”

CHAPTER XVI.

THE APPLICATION OF THE SUBJECT TO THE PRACTICAL MORALITY OF LIFE.

IN the commencement of this Enquiry, a reference was made to the conviction entertained by many pious men, that the study of unfulfilled prophecy was likely to produce a love for speculation, rather than a disposition to meet with alacrity the important and often painful duties of life. I would here recur to this subject, with some anxiety not to be misunderstood. I readily *admit* the existence of the *snare*; but I find an *equivalent snare* in every pursuit and condition of human life. As readily also do I admit the inference *implied*, that *practical utility* is the true *test* by which we are to judge of the value of any pursuit or of any truth which may be presented to our understandings. The whole system of Christianity is plainly a

system connected with moral discipline, self-denial, active service, charity, subjection to the law, and conformity to the mind of God. We never perceive a single doctrine to stand by itself, apart from the practical sympathies and relations of life; but ever occupying an influential place in the frame-work of the social system, and connected with all the strict and incessant obligations of duty. We find doctrine to be the *life* of duty; its motive, its strength, its promise, its reward. We find doctrine to be another word for the *events and facts* of Christianity. We find doctrine to *arise out of* those past events, and to *lead to* the production of *similar events* in future. If, for instance, we read of the death of Christ, and of the atonement which results from it, we find the object to which that death directly leads, to be "*our death unto sin.*" If we read of the resurrection of Christ, and of the doctrine of eternal life which results from it, we find the *object* to which that event directly tends is *our resurrection* from the grave of sin. "*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.*"

If, therefore, I should discover the prospects of the coming reign of Christ upon the earth to have no practical tendency; to have no salutary bearing upon the practical sympathies and

duties of life, I should deem the mode in which I had taken up the subject, to be equivocal, if not erroneous. It would be at variance with the symmetry and proportion of the gospel. It would mark out to my mind an important mistake in the value which I had attached to the subject.

I cannot, however, admit, in any degree, the *necessary* connexion between the expectations of prophecy, and the barren speculations of a mere curious imagination. It appears to me that this connexion might as easily be alleged with any one spiritual truth of the gospel. This allegation is actually made by the world at large. To the urgent inculcation of the healing doctrine of justification by Christ through faith, the reply is quick from the worldly, “ You make useless the inculcation of relative duties ; you endanger the fabric of morality ; you turn away the minds of the young, the industrious, the occupied, from the strict fulfilment of the work assigned to them in *this* world, to the dangerous speculation of a mysterious benefit to be derived from the work of Jesus Christ in *another* world.” This allegation is harmless in the judgment of a Christian; because he knows it to be erroneous. Any instances in proof of its validity which might be adduced, would be inconclusive to him,

however painful ; because he would recollect the best things to be capable of the worst abuse. In the face of any such instance of abuse, he would fearlessly aver the doctrine of justification by Christ, to be the fruitful source of human virtue, and human happiness ; to be the great instrument in the hands of the Eternal Spirit for the destruction of moral evil in the heart ; to have a close and direct connexion with all the loftier and more generous emotions of which the heart is capable.

In a similar manner, in the face of any instances which should be adduced of the occupancy of the mind by the *disproportionate* hopes of the *future*, rather than by the painful self-denials of the *present*, I would, with as little hesitation, avow the subject to which our inquiries have been directed, to stand connected with the most important and influential principles which can sway the conduct of a moral agent.

But, after all, is not this a question referable rather to the *mode* than to the *subjects* of prophetic inquiry ?

I would ask whether *unfulfilled* prophecy be not, in its varied details, the great theme of hope, and of consolation to the whole Christian Church ? Whether a single motive to exertion, a single reference to responsibility, a single

solace to misfortune, a single excitement to infirmity, can be brought to bear upon the understanding and the will, but through the medium of *unfulfilled* prophecy? Is the present condition of the Church any other condition than one of dependence upon the unfulfilled promises of God? The succours of the Spirit, "the presence of Christ to the end of the world," the hopes of heaven, the fears of hell, the expectation of judgment to come, the rewards of mercy, and the retributions of justice; the supports of a death-bed, and the prospects of eternity; what are all these influential subjects of religion, but subjects derived from a belief in the *prophetic* records of revelation? If then the whole stress of practical religion already be found to rest upon scriptural predictions yet *unfulfilled* to the Church, why should the contemplation of the *mode* in which some of these assurances are to be accomplished, become a subject of suspicion and alarm? Why is one part of Scripture dangerous and another safe? Why is one pathway marked out by God, to be approved by the Church, and another pathway, perhaps as plainly marked out, to be condemned as questionable and crooked?

I am surprised that this suspicion should take the form which it has taken. I ground

this surprise upon the fact that all the hopes of those who entertain this suspicion, and all the opinions which they have formed of the future, are derived from the *very study of prophecy* which they condemn. In the ritual of Christian education, in the ministrations of the sanctuary, in the chambers of sorrow, and by the beds of disease and death, good men gladly take their stand amidst the expectations of the future, and repeat, with all the energy and sympathy of their hearts, the prophetic voice of the gospel to those, whose welfare and consolation they are eager to promote. They are anxious to withdraw the thoughts of the sufferer from the present, in order to fix them upon the future; to strengthen his faith, by a recurrence to the unshaken testimony of God; to tell him of a love, which if it be *from* everlasting, is also "*to* everlasting;" to bring before the eye of his faith, a hand which can wipe away the tear which anguish bids to flow; a home where sorrow intrudes not to disturb the scene; a world where sin brings no curse, and death no separation of those who are dear. Or if it be needful to alarm the careless, and to awe the profligate, do not the same men of God refer to the *prophetic* announcements of revelation, and, if possible, give a *present* existence before the mind of the sinner, to those tremendous penal-

ties by which the law of God is guarded and sustained ? Take away *unfulfilled* prophecy, and *fulfilled* prophecy becomes a useless history, and the future prospect of mankind utterly desolate and dark. The difference of opinion, then, between those who are now more especially interested in the study of prophecy and those who are suspicious of it, is, after all, a difference as to *interpretation* and not as to *prophecy itself*. Those who fear the influence of this study upon the minds of others, do not, in fact, fear the *prophecy*, but the *novelty* of its *interpretation*. They have *settled their interpretation*, and wish it to *remain undisturbed*. But is it candid to decry a pursuit under a *false name*? Would it not be more fair to say “ We have examined the future, and we are satisfied our predecessors have adopted the right interpretation ; and we think it dangerous to question its justness. We object not to the announcements of prophecy ; we are habituated to foretell the conversion of the world, the restoration of Israel, the destruction of idolatry, the return of Christ to judgment, the resurrection of the dead, the ascent of the righteous to glory, the assignment of the wicked to the destruction which no warning voice could induce them to escape ; these things we are accustomed to foretell, and upon these prophetic

announcements we rest the whole strength of our appeal to the conscience, and the weight of our arguments for the comfort and tranquillity of the heart. Allow us still to put forth the statements we have made, and do not call in question their *propriety*, or *agreement* with the mind and will of God."

This appears to me to be a fair statement of the case, and to bring the subject, in its real bearing, clearly before our view. No objection is made to prophetic subjects, if they accord with the received interpretation. If we foretell the events of the future as they are depicted by the current theology of the day, no suspicion is generated ; but if we venture to question the correctness of that interpretation ; if we say that it is *possible* our divine Lord should appear again in *person* ; should appear *before* the time of the diffusion of his religion through the world, *in order* so to diffuse it : or if we say that he will dwell at Jerusalem as a priest upon his throne, "*after the order of Melchisedeck*;" or that the *first* resurrection is a *literal*, and not a *spiritual* resurrection ; and that Earth will be the scene of the Redeemer's triumph ; these our statements are immediately suspected to be injurious, and the study of prophecy is declared to be ensnaring and delusive. Is this equal ? is it fair ? Does not the weight of

the objection lie in the unwillingness to examine questions supposed to be settled; in the reluctance to confess the possibility of error; in the indolence which shrinks from the examination of preconceived opinions; and in the difficulty of occupying ground which we hitherto have imperfectly surveyed?

It may, perhaps, be said, that to this *general view* of the future, less objection is made: the *great* objection lies against an attempt to reduce the mysterious chronology of providence to our own rules; to predetermine times and seasons; to limit prophetic events to particular persons and things; and thus to endanger the credibility of prediction in the minds of many, by the failure of our own prophetic announcements.

I admit this to be the vulnerable side of those who have of late years directed their attention to the study of unfulfilled prophecy; and I would, with humility and earnestness, suggest to those who feel a warm and deep interest in coming events, to guard well against *this use* of the subject, and to fix their thoughts rather upon the *character* of the future, than upon its *minute details*. The latter, time and events can alone properly ascertain: the former, the whole language and scope of prophecy unfolds and confirms.

Should it be asked in what respects we deem

the *novel* views, as they are somewhat *unjustly** called, to have the advantage in practical influence over those which we seem anxious to displace, I would offer to the Christian reader a few observations in reply to this question.

It will be obvious to observe that *both lines* of interpretation *coincide*, as to the boundaries which mark out the paramount interests of mankind. *Both* direct our views to the wide diffusion of Christianity through the earth; to the ultimate coming of Christ to the world; to the resurrection of the dead; to the endless felicity of the redeemed in the presence of their Lord; and to the awful banishment of the impenitent into the outer darkness of sin and woe. And these topics are the great sources of motive to exertion; the deep fountains of human hope and of fear. The *interpretations* adopted in the preceding pages, are but *modifications* of these *primary* and *paramount* truths. Hence it cannot be expected that any very *striking moral results* should be the fruit of their reception by those who adopt them, as *contradistinguished* from any *parallel results* derived from the common and received interpretations of the future. Salvation by Christ, eternal life, or eternal woe, these are the ideas round which the varied sympathies of man are

* Vide Appendix (B.)

wont to gather; and which give vigour and effect to all his efforts and expectations.

It may, however, be nevertheless true, that *certain modifications* of these great and essential doctrines of prophecy should give a *coherence* and *symmetry* to the proportions of Christianity; should *arrange* much that may have been *confused* in the mind; should throw a steadier *light* upon that which is *obscure*; should render *distinct* that which is *perplexed*; and give a *vividness* and *simplicity* to expectations which were in general *dim* and *intricate*: should bring out into *beauty* and *harmony* certain points which were discerned rather in their *general dimensions* than in their *proportionate parts*; should give a *fresh stimulus* to duty, by making its *recompense* more *apparent*; should render the themes of redemption and of incarnate love more *attractive* and *intelligible*, by bringing forward their results into more direct contact with *existing scenery*, and with more *familiar* associations. In all *these advantages* there is certainly nothing so new, so impressive, so distinctive, so influential, as to bear, with *overwhelming importance* upon the great interests of mankind; and yet there may be, in these advantages, much to cheer, refresh, invigorate, and delight the pious and expecting heart; there may be in them much to render

the intimations of the future more *attractive* and *conceivable*; much to throw around the more vast and transcendant truths of revelation the hues of a *brighter loveliness*, and the proportions of a *clearer vision*.

. It is in this way that the subject has acted upon my own mind, and it is with this reference that I have felt anxious to draw the attention of my fellow Christians to its consideration. To a few of these *minor*, but still *practical results*, I would here briefly refer.

1. I think these views of the events connected with the advent of Christ to be well calculated, in the mind of the Christian, to *reduce the value of all his external and sublunary enjoyments*. To compare a *purified Earth* with the present *polluted scene*, is to form a *readier contrast*, than to compare the present scene with a world, of whose usages and character we are wholly ignorant. To anticipate an *innocent and holy earth*, cheered by the presence of Christ, and animate with converted and happy beings, is to give to the mind an *easier*, and I think, therefore, a more *practical* subject of contemplation, than any which is discoverable from the misty notions of a region of *felicity, apart and separate* from all the habits of the present world. I am ready at once to concede that the received notions, indistinct as they are, are

yet powerful to influence the believing heart. They open before us the deep sources of hope and fear. But I am as satisfied, that in proportion as our ideas of future felicity become *clear* and *lucid*, we are more *powerfully* attracted, and more *pleasingly* influenced by them.

The thought of *death* and *eternity* will efficiently reduce the value of external advantages. It will cast a shade over their delusive brightness, and relieve the mind in part from the pressure of their solicitous claims. But I think the same result will more *cheerfully*, and certainly as *efficiently* be produced by the readier contrast between a present and a future dispensation of the *existing* earth. The “all that is *now* in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,” will be more readily grappled with and subdued by the contemplation of an approaching condition, still connected, indeed, with the local scenery of earth, but glorified in its character and qualities; than by the anticipation of a world which admits of no one comparison with any objects hitherto familiar to the eye or the ear. Would not the promise of a gift, similar in *kind*, but far more valuable in *quality*, with that which a child should be invited to resign, be far more effective to induce him to resign it, than the *general* promise of a gift, of whose exact nature

he could form no *definite idea*? The latter promise might *effect* the resignation, the former would *pleasingly solicit* it. The renovation of the world, the intercourse of Christ as the second Adam, the creative beauties of a system with which we are already conversant and delighted, appear to me to bring within the reach of a *direct* and *easy* estimate of insignificance, the existing advantages of rank, wealth, power, influence, ease, and sensual pleasure. These, the approach of *death* will render valueless to the Christian; but surely the *present substitution* for them in the mind, of a material or terrestrial happiness in the presence of the Redeemer, will cast them more easily into the shade, and this rather by the attractive force of contrast, than by the stern compulsion of demolition and decay.

2. In a similar manner I think these views of the advent of Christ calculated to *reconcile the poorer Christian to the struggles of the present life*. I again admit this to be a question of *degree*, and of facile influence. The dim thought of heaven will cheer and comfort him in this struggle; but I think a *simpler* and more *intelligible* solace might reach his heart, if, when toiling in the cold shade of poverty, or groaning on the bed of ill mitigated disease, he could connect the voice, the eye, the welcome of his

Saviour, with a body free from sin and pain, and in the sunshine of a world, with whose scenery and usages all his thoughts and habits are familiar. Such a solace would still be to him his heaven, but a heaven more palpably reduced to the level of his comprehension and his hopes.

3. I should anticipate also from the prevalence of these views of the coming of our blessed Lord, *a far stronger feeling of Christian charity*, amidst the diversities of human opinion. We expect reunion of opinion in *Heaven*: we expect *there* the results of *intuition* rather than of *reason*: we expect there to be as one family, and to share one undivided felicity. But how *powerless* has been *this anticipation* hitherto to smooth the ruggedness of religious controversy! What barriers still exist against the coalition of human feelings, amidst the diversities of sect and church! Heaven is a place, *distant, untried, unknown*. Might it not effect this hallowed work of concord and charity, to contemplate the *approaching advent* of the Lord, to espouse his church in *terrestrial* though *spiritual* glory to himself? How *near* may be the hour when all the contentions of the ransomed church shall be annihilated and forgotten in the accordant exclamation, “*The marriage of the Lamb is come.*” How *near* may be the

time when this renovated earth shall be under the benignant rule of the risen saints of God ! “ *When he shall appear then shall we also appear with Him in glory.*” CHRISTIANS ! the name and nature of God is LOVE, and you are to be ONE IN HIM—his advent may be near ; you are brothers of one family, and your Father’s house will soon open upon your view. Your divisions and heart-burnings and reasonings, will soon pass into oblivion, and the earth “ *will break forth before you into singing.*” You are now builders in a City which will expand into eternal beauty and strength ; but remember the *scaffolding* on which you stand is *temporary*, but the *communion of saints* is *eternal*. The speedy advent of Christ may give a *vividness* and *force* to this recollection. When your Master comes, let him find you in harmony, in faith, in love.

4. The expectation *may stimulate us in the discharge of the ordinary duties of life.*

The thought of death is urgent to this end. “ *The time is short ;*” “ *the night cometh when no man can work ;*” “ *watch, for you know not at what hour your Lord cometh.*” “ *While we have time let us do good unto all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith.*” These expressions are weighty and influential ; they have given energy and power to human agents, during many an elapsing age, and they are as-

sociated with all the mightiest movements of a human heart.

They may yet derive, I think, an *additional* efficacy from the view of the millenial felicity of the earth. This is the practical inference of the apostle Peter, (2 Pet. iii. 11, 14.) “*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new HEAVENS and a new EARTH, wherein dwelleth righteousness; wherefore beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.*”

The Apostle here associates the *expectation* of a *new earth*, with the strongest motives to *practical godliness*. The *approach* of the Master ought to be peculiarly influential upon the *fidelity* and *zeal* of the servant. The *sudden advent* of the Lord, is in his own prophecy *united* to the *activity* of the disciple. The *connexion* is in humble life, but it is illustrative of our topic. “*Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left.*” “*Blessed is that servant, whom his*

Lord when he cometh shall find so doing." To unite the steady thought of HIS advent with every *present* effort, is calculated to cheer toil, to dignify poverty, and to consecrate, by high motives, even the lowest avocations of industry and love.

And what are the peculiar features of that ELECT CHURCH which is to REIGN with Christ? Are they not humility, gratitude, zeal, active usefulness, intense charity? What ought then to be the estimate formed under the strong anticipation of this beneficent REIGN, of the character and duties of the present life? Ought it not to be accounted specially a school of moral discipline, intended not merely to qualify us for *heavenly happiness*, but to *train* us to the *direct habits* of *beneficence*, and *zeal*, and *kindness*, in order to fit us for the high and generous office of ruling the world in righteousness, under the eye and glorious presence of the great Redeemer? In this connexion of the future government of the world, with what an impressive energy ought we to listen to the counsels which remind us of diligence, activity, usefulness, self-denial, and sympathy? How opposite to *our* habits ought to be those of selfishness, indolence, and worldly ease? How stimulative to our efforts ought to be the example of our Lord? How forcible to our love of

justice, rectitude, and truth, the personal appeal to conscience. "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" To be found in the path of *duty* when the Ruler comes ought to be the paramount desire of our hearts; and the expectation would give to us a solemnity, and a gladness greatly auxiliary to its accomplishment. It would lead to that habit of mind which connects *responsibility* with all the *conditions* of life. It is related of that great and good man, Sir Matthew Hale, that "going that year the western circuit, it happened that as he sat on the bench at the assizes, a most terrible storm fell out very unexpectedly, accompanied with such flashes of lightning and claps of thunder, that the like will hardly fall out in an age; upon which a whisper or rumour ran through the crowd that now was *the world to end*, and the day of *judgment to begin*; and at this followed a general consternation in the whole assembly, and all men *forgot* the business they were met about, and betook themselves to their prayers. The judge, however, was *not a whit affected*, and *went on with the business of the court* in his *ordinary manner*."^{*} The inference I would draw from this anecdote is, that a Christian

* Wordsworth's Biography, vol. 6, p. 85.

will deem the *fulfilment of known duty* to be the best *attitude* in which to *meet* his God. He will stand as a sentinel at his post, expecting the Captain of his salvation to appear suddenly before him.

I cannot here refrain from a single remark upon the duty incumbent upon the Christian, to *unite* with every *zealous effort*, to *spread* the gospel *through the world*. For although I think it plain that the restoration of the Jews and the advent of the Lord, will *precede* the conversion of the world by the wondrous effusion of the Holy Spirit, yet, as the Lord specially directed his gospel to be proclaimed *to all nations as a witness*, and as *duty* is at all times *ours*, and *events* are *God's*, we are called upon to make the most strenuous efforts to sustain the mission of Heralds to the world, and the diffusion of the scriptures among the nations. It is likewise a cheerful stimulus to present activity, to remember that human agency will even ultimately be employed in this great work of mercy to the earth. It is therefore quite consistent with the miraculous view of the millennium given above, to associate with it the widest co-operation of mortal agents. Every Bible scattered among the heathen, every school erected in the wilderness; every voice of Christianity addressed to the idolatrous and

the ignorant, is one link in that chain of *providential preparation*, which, while it *now* encircles the hearts of all the Elect of God, will *ultimately* bind in hallowed allegiance the innumerable tribes of the family of man. Would to God then that Christian zeal were yet more fervid, Christian effort more unwearied, Christian liberality to the wants and sorrows of the world more munificent and unrestrained! It was a direct reference to the *victory over sin and death*, associated with the *first resurrection to eternal life*, which drew forth from the Apostle that noble and practical exclamation, (1 Cor. xv. 58.) “*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always ABOUNDING in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*”

5. The last practical result to which I shall refer in connexion with the second advent, is to be found in the more *definite view which it imparts of our actual relationship to our Lord Jesus Christ*. This remark will harmonize with all the statements of the preceding enquiry. It is the subject interwoven with every part of revealed truth. As the *Lord Jesus*, we hail his glad approach to wind up the great work of eternal salvation. But as the *Second Adam*, the Head of human nature, the Ruler in Zion, the Governor *among the nations*, he is little re-

cognised. Perhaps the dread of Socinianism has induced the Christian Church to fix too exclusively her eye upon his Divine nature ; but *every* truth of God is important, and the connexion of Christ with the Earth, while it will ultimately wither the blasphemous hopes of Socinianism, will *glorify* the condition of his people, and render the Earth a beauteous scene of rectitude, and joy, and peace. This truth, I repeat, appears to me, to be the true key to all the promises ; to be the pole star of human hope ; the just interpreter of the **INCARNATION** ; the final issue of creative power ; the noblest work of the Eternal Spirit ; the mightiest triumph of the Father's love

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

IN bringing to a close this short enquiry into the prospects of the future, I am deeply conscious of the very imperfect delineation of the subject which I have afforded to those who may have perused the foregoing pages. They comprise, indeed, a very *faint*, outline of the prophetic topics to which they refer. I can only regard them as notices which abler minds may perhaps be induced to use, and to extend into an examination in some degree more worthy of the exalted themes upon which they touch.

It is not without some feeling of melancholy and pain, that I submit this enquiry to the judgment of others. To venture on subjects opposed to the views of many of the great and good of the past and the present time; to be accessory to the disturbance of many a pleasant

and quiet and holy train of thought ; to incur the suspicion of some, and to meet the regret of others ; to attempt to unfix the settled interpretations of a large and extended portion of the records of Revelation, and to place perhaps a new snare in the path of the curious and the speculative, is a result from which I have often recoiled with some degree of anxiety and alarm. It is a trial to the conscience and the heart, to proceed under impressions of this kind ; and it is alone the imperative conviction that the word of God is injured and misrepresented by the existing views of Theology, that has compelled me to bring the subject of the second advent of Christ into the light of a more distinct scrutiny.

I humbly submit the result to HIM who has emphatically said, “*Buy the truth and sell it not.*” I am unable to lay down the pen without recording one or two suggestions on the study of the subjects to which these pages allude.

1. The *unholy use* of prophecy in the periods in which some have attempted its elucidation, has more or less cast a shade of suspicion, over the subjects to which they have directed the attention of mankind.

The *earthliness* of interpretation employed in the *early* centuries of the Church, and the

proud turbulence of political interpretation in the more recent periods of our own history, have gone far to render the very name of the millenial reign a sound which vibrates harshly upon the ear. Yet the presence of a *counterfeit* implies the value of an *original* coin; and the false glosses of the earthly and the turbulent may stand in connexion with important and essential truth. *To examine into the future with reverence, solemnity, sobriety, and humility of mind*, is therefore a lesson which the *errors of the past* may well prevail to teach.

2. The eager desire to leave no difficulty unremoved, and no obscurity of promise unexplained, may likewise induce a *hastiness of minute interpretation* which shall expose the developments of Providence to the scorn and irreverent sarcasm of the ungodly. *Hence caution and diffidence should be our guides in the pursuit of the knowledge of the mind and will of God.*

3. The *future* ought ever to be associated with the *present* in our minds; and the *ordinary duties* of society to claim our perpetual regard. We ought carefully to watch against a *disproportionate pursuit* of prophetic enquiries. It was well said by an ancient author that “ one duty ought never to be stained with the blood of another.”

4. The views of the future as connected with

the approaching advent of Jesus Christ are serious and even *appalling*. *Prayer, submission, and patience*, will be our appropriate guides along the pathways of this enquiry. To no subject does levity and rashness so little belong as to the study of prophecy. The winding up of the Christian scheme is amidst the tempest and the earthquake. The days of evil may be "*shortened for the elect's sake*." but they are still to be days of terrific evil. "*In the world ye shall have tribulation*." "*It were vain*," says a living writer, "*it were vain to seek to escape from the conditions of our place in the dominions of God*. A mind of wandering and melancholy thought, impatient of the grievous realities of our state, may at some moments almost breathe the wish that we had been a different race of beings, in another dwelling-place than this, and appointed on a different service to the Almighty. In vain ! Here still we are to pass the first part of our existence, in a world where it is impossible to be at peace, because there has come into it a mortal enemy to all that live in it. Amidst the darkness that veils from us the state of the universe, we would willingly be persuaded that this our world may be the only region (except that of penal justice) where the cause of evil is permitted to maintain a contest. Here,

perhaps, may be almost its last encampment, where its prolonged power of hostility may be suffered in order to give a protracted display of the manner of its appointed destruction. Here our lot is cast on a ground so awfully pre-occupied; a calamitous distinction! but yet a sublime one, if thus we may render to the eternal King a service of a more arduous kind than it is possible to the inhabitants of any other world than this to render him; and if thus we may be trained through devotion and conformity to the celestial chief in this warfare, to the final attainment of what he has so promised in so many illustrious forms, to him that overcometh. We shall soon leave the region where so much is in rebellion against our God. But we shall go where all that pass from our world must present themselves as from battle, or be denied to mingle in the eternal joys and triumphs of the conquerors?" *

The justness of these sentiments it were useless to remark. It becomes the student of prophecy to stand upon his watch-tower as *in the presence of his God*, and to abide at his post in the *quietness of faith*, and in the *seriousness of conflict*. It may cheer him, however,

* Vide Foster's Essay on Popular Ignorance, &c. p. 544.

to anticipate the dawn of a bright and perpetual day in *the very scene* over which the gloom of night has so long brooded. It may cheer him to listen for the voice which shall shortly tell him, "*Behold all things are become new.*"

5. The last observation which I would make, and which I desire to impress deeply upon my own mind, and upon the minds of others, in connexion with the foregoing subject, is *the equal importance of personal godliness under every mode of prophetic interpretation which our judgments may respectively prefer.*

The *personal* and *visible* reign of Christ can be shared by those alone who are *conformed* to his *spiritual* character. "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*" "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*" There is an eternal harmony in the works and dispensations of God. The harvest accords with the seed which has been sown. "*Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap; he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.*"

In the contemplation of the future, this observation is of the last importance. Without this abiding recollection, prophecy may become to us as a fable; a mere picture to the imaginative; a

scheme to the curious ; a coherent plan to a moral architect ; and yet a delusion to a polluted heart. If the *reign* of Christ be not first *within our renewed souls*, we shall never share it in *a renewed world*. If HE legislate not over our *passions* and our *affections*, we shall never bear rule in the regions of his rescued earth. If God the Holy Ghost *regenerate* not our *hearts*, He will never *regenerate* our *bodies*. Our *conformity* to Christ must be *entire*. We must first be *crucified* ere we can be *glorified*. His *Sceptre* must be in our *hearts* ere his *Crown* can rest upon our *heads*.

“ Oh loved, but not enough—tho’ dearer far,
Than self and its most loved enjoyments are—
None duly loves thee, but who nobly free
From sensual objects, finds his all in thee—

Glorious, Almighty, First, and without end,
When wili Thou melt the mountains and descend ?
When wilt Thou shoot abroad thy conquering rays,
And teach these atoms thou hast formed thy praise !

My reason, all my faculties unite,
To make thy glory, their supreme delight ;
Forbid it, Fountain of my brightest days,
That I should rob thee, and usurp thy praise !

My soul ! rest happy in thy low estate,
Nor hope nor wish to be esteemed or great.
To take the impression of a will divine,
Be that thy glory and those riches thine !

Confess him righteous in his just decrees,
Love what he loves, and let his pleasure please;
Die daily—from the touch of sin recede;
Then thou hast CROWNED Him, and he REIGNS indeed!**

To those whose mental associations accord with these views of the *spiritual victories* of Christ, his *visible* and *coming glory* will be an influential theme of meditation and joy. Amidst the conflicts of inward corruption, the pangs of disease, the groans of oppression; amidst the tears of the suffering, the mistakes of the ignorant, and the blasphemies of the proud; the *spiritual mind* will anticipate a *glorious* though still *terrestrial* state, in which evil will have no place, and happiness be exposed to no temptation; in which mind mingling with mind, and enlarging its knowledge under every new facility for truth, will yield itself up “to those intellectual revelations, to that everlasting sun-light of the soul,” in which the truly wise will enjoy the presence of their Lord through the periods of a blissful eternity.

* Vide Translations of M. Guion by Cowper.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

Reasons for altering the punctuation in Luke xxiii. 43.

“*Καὶ εἶπεν οἱ Ἰησοῦς, Αμὴν λέγω σοι σημερον, μετ' εμού εσῃ
εὐ τῷ παραδεισῷ.*” “Verily I say unto thee this day,
thou shalt be with me in Paradise.”

In the humble conviction that the object which I propose to myself in this enquiry is not the defence of a particular opinion, but the elucidation of revealed truth; I beg to submit to the Christian reader, a little more in detail, those reasons which induce me to give an exposition of the 43d verse of the 23d chapter of Luke, differing so much from the interpretation generally received in the Church of Christ.

It were superfluous to remark that the proposed change in the punctuation is no suggestion of my own. All that is *original*, (as far at least as I am acquainted,) in the exposition of the passage, is its *direct limitation* to the millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

That I may take no unfair advantage of any reader,

however limited his critical knowledge, who may peruse these pages, I will in the *first* place record before him the opinions of several commentators, in *opposition* to the view which I have taken, and whose learning, piety, and knowledge of Christianity, in common with others, I deeply and cordially respect.

“ ‘This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.’ To put the stop *after* ‘to-day,’ and to read it as connected with what goes before, ‘I say unto thee this day,’ is a *mere shift*, and gives a most trifling and jejune sense of the words.”—*Gill’s Body of Divinity*, B. vii. ch. 3.

“ Luke xxiii. 43. Some would remove the stop, and place it *after* ‘to-day,’ as if Christ only signified the *time* when he said this; which, besides its being *senseless* and *impertinent*, (not pertinent,) and only contrived to serve an hypothesis, is not agreeable to Christ’s usual way of speaking; and is contrary to all copies and versions. Moreover, in one of Beza’s Exemplars, it is read, ‘οτι σημερον,’ ‘I say unto thee, *that* this day thou shalt be with me in paradise;’ and so the Persic and Ethiopic seem to read; which destroys this *silly* criticism.”—*Gill’s Com. on the Bible*, in loc.

“ I know there have been great pains taken to show that the stops should be altered, and the comma should be placed after the words ‘to-day;’ as though Jesus Christ meant no more than this; ‘Thou askest me to remember thee when I come into my kingdom; and I declare unto thee this day, that some long time hereafter, thou shalt be with me in Paradise—in happiness, at my resurrection, when my kingdom shall be just at an end, and

I shall give it up to my Father.' (1 Cor. xv. 26.) Can any one imagine this to be the meaning of our blessed Saviour, in answer to the prayer of the dying penitent? I know also there are other laborious criticisms to represent the words 'to-day,' in other places of scripture, as referring to some distant time, and not to mean that very day of twenty-four hours. But rather than enter into a long and critical debate upon all those texts, I will venture to trust the sense of it in this place with any sincere and unlearned reader."—*Watts's Proofs of a Separate State.*

"Luke xxiii. 43. *Hodie, σημερον.* Al. Post resurrectionem. *Pessima* interpretatio. Est autem illud 'hodie,' εμφατικον et solet beneficiorum mentioni adjici ut Jer. i. 10. (*καθεστακα σε σημερον, επι εθνη, και βασιλειας.*) *Pessime* fecerunt qui 'σημερον' cum 'λεγω' conjunixerunt, quod asserte improbat Syrus, et consensus codicum qui omnes illud connectant cum εση; et usus autorum in colloquiis veteribus. *σημερον μετ'εμου αριστον,* *Hodie* mecum prandeto.—*Terent.* *Hodie* apud me sis, volo.—*Plautus.* *Nempe tu* *hodie* *mecum eris.* 1 Sam. xxviii. 19. *Cras* *mecum eritis.*"—*Poli Synopsis Critorum, in loc.*

"Luke xxiii. 43. *Hodie, σημερον.* Quærit Theophylactus quâ hoc convenit cum iis quæ dicuntur, Heb. xi. 39, veteres illos sanctos quorum illic fit mentio non accepisse promissionem, et ad hunc nodum explicandum multa *sane absurdâ* commemorat, quæ non attingo, ne a scopo videar aberrare. Tantum dico, *nimium audaces* fuisse qui particulam *σημερον* adjecta distinctione, conjunixerunt cum verbo *λεγω*, cum in omnibus codicibus

connectatur cum verbo $\epsilon\sigma\eta$, et in quodam etiam exemplari legatur $o\tau\iota \sigma\eta\mu\epsilon\rho\sigma\tau$.”—*Beza in loc.*

In commenting upon the foregoing quotations, I would *first* reply to the objections which they contain; and, *secondly*, give the reasons for which I approve the punctuation which they so violently condemn.

I. It is obvious, and I can truly say painful, to remark the total want of candour in the mode in which all these condemnatory (for they are not critical) remarks are made.

Truth is calm, tolerant, and fearless. On the other hand a tone of querulousness and contempt betrays the consciousness of weakness. It is distressing to observe how entirely these writers set aside scrutiny, and substitute in its place hard words, and even the imputation of unfair motives.

Were the case perfectly evident, it needed not this auxiliary of sarcasm. But, in truth, have not all these authors *themselves* a latent hypothesis to support? Is not their real objection to the punctuation at issue, derived neither from the structure of the language, nor the obviousness of the sense; but from the conviction that, if just, it would wrest from their hands one defence of the doctrine of the intermediate state of the soul between death and the resurrection?

It is easy, but unworthy to say, without further examination, “*pessima interpretatio*;” “*nimum audaces*;” “*multa sane absurdia commemorat*.”

The consent of manuscripts and versions in favour of the existing punctuation, may, at first sight, appear to be a very substantial advantage; but a little consideration

may entirely reduce the value of such a circumstance. I need scarcely observe, that punctuation is no part of an ancient manuscript. Not only are all stops omitted, but even words are undefined. The letters follow each other in close order, as may be seen in the specimens given by Mr. Horne, in his valuable work on the "Critical Study of the Scriptures," vol. ii. p. 79.

When, therefore, versions were to be formed from ancient manuscripts, the modern punctuation adopted, was the work of the critic and not of the original writer of the manuscript. But as the doctrine of the intermediate state of happiness to the righteous, between death and the resurrection, has been the received opinion of the Christian Church, and as this doctrine, comprising the terrific engine of *Purgatory*, was peculiarly dear to the *Roman Church*, I think it ought not to surprise any reader, to find that every manuscript and version since the present mode of punctuation was adopted, should contain the pause *before* the word "*σημερον*," and not *after* it. Hence the agreement of manuscripts and versions, while it evinces the view which each succeeding critic may have taken, is in no respect conclusive as to the original meaning of the text.

Beza remarks that he had seen one version, in which the particle *οτι* was prefixed. And Gill thinks the Persic and Ethiopic versions *favour* this also. I own it to be a little surprising that the example was not followed by others; that *only one* manuscript should have *οτι* prefixed, is to me a strong presumption that it is an interpolation.

II. Having made these few observations upon the statements of commentators, I proceed briefly to state

the grounds on which I am obliged to prefer the opposite view of the question.

1. This punctuation, for which I contend, is preferable, because, in this case, the *petition* of the suppliant *accords* with the *answer* of the Saviour.

It will readily be admitted, that the *nature* of a question asked, is a juster clue to the answer which it receives, than any latent hypothesis, the credit of which the commentator may observe to be involved in the *nature* of the reply. And yet I cannot hesitate to aver, that the *hypothesis* of the intermediate state between death and the resurrection has been the true key to the accordant opinions of commentators on the meaning of the text in question.

It will be more fair, however, to lay this hypothesis out of sight, and to consider the *actual grammatical meaning* of the question, or rather the supplication made by this dying man. “*Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*” Adhering, then, to the *words themselves*, am I unfair in denying to them any reference to the *present time*; or any reference to the approaching session of Christ at the right hand of God? The time to which these words refer is surely the *coming of Christ* into his kingdom? Now, over the dying head of Christ was registered the inscription, “*This is the king of the Jews:*” and, respecting this kingdom, Christ had said, “*My kingdom is not now, (vvv) of this world;*” implying that the hour was coming, when it **WOULD BE** “*of this world!*” Did not, then, the expiring criminal refer to this very kingdom? Is not his expression, “*when thou COMEST,*” accordant with this idea? In order to erect this kingdom, Christ must *return* to earth.

I may be wrong in my view of this kingdom ; but with the strong conviction I entertain of its nature, as delineated in the foregoing pages, I deem the language of the thief to be simple and luminous. What other thought may have had occupancy of his mind, I here ask not. In that moment of mingled anguish and hope, who can limit the workings of his soul ? But I bound my enquiry to the *words which he actually uttered*, and in them I can find no one reference, either to present consolation, or to the heaven to which Christ was shortly to be exalted. He speaks to the Redeemer as to a King who will *come back* to receive a kingdom ; and he implores mercy and remembrance in that *eventful day !*

2. The proposed punctuation is preferable, because the *answer* of the Saviour *limits*, I think, this interpretation of the prayer : “ *Verily I say unto thee this day, thou shalt be with me in paradise.* ” - If we should be able to ascertain the meaning of the term *paradise*, it will throw much light on the nature of the whole reply ; and it appears to me possible to do this. The word *paradise* occurs only *three times* in the New Testament :— in the text in question ; in the 2 Cor. xii. 4 ; and in Rev. ii. 7. Its meaning in the text has been ever deemed equivocal. In 2 Cor. xii. 4. the confusion in the mind of the apostle himself must render any comment upon the term fruitless : he knew not what had happened to him, and it was not “ *lawful*,” or possible for him to utter it. We are led, therefore, with some anxiety, to the remaining passage of the Rev. ii. 7 ; and here, to my mind, a very satisfactory *limitation* to its use and meaning may be found.

The words are, “ *To him that overcometh will I give*

to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Now there are two passages in the subsequent pages of the Revelations which are very illustrative of this remarkable promise before us.

The one is, the 26th and 27th verses of this same chapter. (Rev. ii. 26, 27.) “*To him that overcometh and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.*” It is here to be observed, that this promise of “*power over the nations,*” is made to the *same character* as is the promise “*to eat of the tree of life in the paradise of God,*” viz. in each case “*to him that overcometh.*” But the era in which the saints shall “*have power over the nations,*” as we have seen, is the era of *the second advent*, if the interpretation comprised in the foregoing pages be correct; therefore is not the time “*to eat of the tree of life in the paradise of God,*” in all probability identical *also* with the *second advent of Christ?*

The other text to which I allude, increases much the degree of this probability. This text is, Rev. xxii. 2. “*In the midst of the street of it was there the tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits.*” This verse is a part of the delineation of the *Bridal Church*, or the children of “*the first resurrection.*” (xxii. 9.) Because the same angel which had poured out one of the last vials of wrath before the advent of Christ, talked with the apostle, and said, “*Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife; and he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.*” He then describes the bride of Christ

under the image of a beauteous city ; and the “*river of life*,” and the “*tree of life*” form a part of its delineation.

Is not then the “*paradise of God*” the same with the *personal kingdom* of Christ, and the *glorification* of the saints, or the Bridal Church in the *renovated earth*? The reader will form his own estimate of these *accordances*; but to me they are striking and satisfactory; and they render the answer of our adorable Lord perfectly appropriate to the anxious prayer addressed to him.

That the pious Dr. Watts should have seemed to speak lightly of the blessing to be conferred in this kingdom, “*just as it was about to be delivered up to his Father*,” no doubt arose from the view he took of the nature of that kingdom. He deemed the second advent to be the period of its *termination*. The scriptures appear to me, as I have already stated at large, to assert the second advent to be rather the bright era of its *commencement*. Hence I cannot but discern a singular force, beauty, harmony, and sublimity, in the petition of the dying sinner, and the answer of the dying Saviour.

3. The view here given of this subject is, I think, strongly confirmed by the very *different manner* in which our Lord referred to an *event*, which was to take place *on the day on which he foretold it*. I allude to the mournful history of Peter’s denial of his blessed Master. St. Luke thus records the prophecy, (Luke xxii. 34.) “‘Ο δε ειπε· Λεγω σοι, Πέτρε, ου μη φωνήσει σημερον αλεκτωρ, πριν η τρις απαρηση μη ειδευαι με.’” Here the adverb of time, *σημερον*, is put *after* the verb by which it is governed, and marks out, beyond the *possibility of mistake*, that the prophecy would be fulfilled *that very day*. The *σημερον* is here very emphatic. Peter was strong in

his conviction of love and fidelity. He was told that he would deny his Lord ere the cock should crow that very day. Had the adverb of time been *so* placed in the text, which is now the subject of controversy, the meaning would have been as emphatic and as evident ; “*Αμην λεγω σοι, μετ’ ἐμον εση σημερον εν τῷ παραδεισῷ.*” But as it now reads, “*Αμην λεγω σοι σημερον μετ’ ἐμον εση εν παραδεισῷ,*” the emphasis depends upon its connexion with *λεγω*. “I say unto thee, *this day*”—*this day* of my agony, I promise thee glory and eternal life.

This collocation of the adverb appears to be yet more intentional, by referring to the detail of the same predicted event, as recorded in the Gospel of St. Mark, xiv. 30. “*Καὶ λεγει αυτῷ ὁ Ἰησον· Αμην λεγω σοι, οτι σημερον εν τῇ νυκτὶ ταυτῇ, πριν η δις αλεκτορα φωνησαι, τρις απαρνησῃ με.*” How striking is the effort here made to arrest the mind of Peter to *this very day*! A few hours would only elapse, and all his resolutions of allegiance and love would fail ! But is the inconstancy of the human will a more remarkable event, than the translation of a criminal from a cross to a crown ? And yet in the ordinary punctuation of the text in question, the emphasis of the time *σημερον*, is lost. It may belong to *either verb*, and the whole is equivocal. If we, on the other hand, connect it with *λεγω*, it then *becomes very emphatic*; as if our divine Redeemer had said, “A strange prophecy it may seem to record, in this day of my weakness and depression; but in the face of the universe I register it now : and *when* it shall be realised hereafter, the world will indeed know that God hath sent me. Yes—I say unto thee this day, thou *shalt* be with me in paradise. I am a king, and thou *shalt* share my regal glory !”

4. The last reason which I will adduce, is a *similar*

emphasis given to the time of recording a command or privilege, in the Old Testament.

I quote here from the Septuagint, and beg the reader to examine the following texts, as a specimen of the emphasis to which I refer.

Deut. iv. 40. Τα δικαιωματα αυτου οσα εγω εντελλομαι σοι σημερον.

Ch. vi. 6. Και εσται τα ρηματα ταυτα οσα εγω εντελλομαι σοι σημερον εν τη καρδιᾳ σου και εν τη ψυχῃ σου.

Ch. vii. 11. Τα κριματα ταυτα οσα εγω εντελλομαι σοι σημερον ποιειν.

Ch. viii. 1. Πασας τας εντολας ας εγω εντελλομαι υμιν σημερον.

Ch. viii. 19. Διαμαρτυρομαι υμιν σημερον τον τε ουρανον και την γην οτι απωλεια απολεισθε.

Ch. xi. 8. Και φυλαξεσθε πασας τας εντολας αυτου οσας εγω εντελλομαι σοι σημερον ινα ζητε.

Ch. xi. 13. Ας εγω εντελλομαι σοι σημερον αγαπαν κυριον.

Jer. i. 10. Ιδου καθεστακα σε σημερον επι εθνη και επι βασιλειας εκριζον και κατασκαπτειν.

Matt. vi. 11. Τον αρτον ημων τον επιουσιον δος ημιν σημερον.

Luke. ii. 11. Οτι ετεχθη υμιν σημερον σωτηρ.

When the reader has perused these passages, I think I may be permitted to ask, whether or not the ear, conversant with these expressions, must not have been familiar with the emphasis given to the *time* of recording a command or a promise; and whether or not the words of the text “Αμην λεγω σοι σημερον,” be not, as to structure and earnestness, in full accordance with the mode of address thus exhibited in the writings of the Old Testament?

Upon these several grounds I cannot, then, refuse my assent to the punctuation condemned by the venerable

names of Gill, Watts, Beza, and Pool. Laying aside altogether any inferences which a favourite hypothesis may induce us to draw, and attending simply to the *nature of the question asked*, to the *nature of the reply received*, to the peculiar *emphasis* by which our Lord marked out an event less striking, *immediately about to happen*, and to the *wonted phraseology of the former prophets* of the Old Testament, when they registered any solemn *prophetic announcement*; from these several reasons I have derived a very strong conviction, that the present punctuation of this text, in all existing versions, leads to an erroneous view of the promise made by our Lord to the penitent, then dying beneath his eye.

Since writing the above, I have been much struck with a various reading referred to by Curcellæus and Mill, as contained in the Cambridge manuscript of Beza, in Luke xxiii. 43. “ ‘Lord remember me in the day of thy advent.’ ‘Ἐν τῇ ημερᾳ τῆς ελευσεως.’ This expression would give a *greater precision* to the request than the words ‘comest into thy kingdom;’ although the idea is identical. It is remarkable in this connexion to observe that the *only occasion* in the New Testament in which the word *ελευσις* is used, is in reference to the *first advent* of Christ. Acts vii. 52. “ *Τινα των προφητων ουκ εδιωξαν οι πατερες υμων; και απεκτειναν τους προκαταγγειλαντας περι της ελευσεως του δικαιου, ου νυν υμεις προδοται και φονεις γεγενησθε?*”

The agreement between these two passages of scripture, in reference to the *word* describing the *advents* of Christ, is at least very remarkable, and adds strength to my conviction, that a revelation of the *second advent* and

first resurrection was *divinely* made to the mind of the repentant criminal.

In conclusion, to mark the *real difficulty* of the ordinary punctuation, I will refer to the view taken of the immediate results of the death of Christ, by a pious and learned prelate of our church. “ His soul, separated, must go either to heaven or to hell. *Not* to heaven; John xx. 17. But Luke xxiii. 43. ‘*Est sensus multo expeditior et ab omnibus ambiguitatibus liber, si non secundum id quod homo erat, sed id quod Deus erat, dixisse accipiatur, Hodie tecum eris,*’ &c.—AUG.

“ That it went to hell is plain, from Eph. iv. 9; Rom. x. 6, 7; Ps. xvi. 10; Acts ii. 31. This hath been the constant opinion of the Catholic Church, although they differed in the end of his descent. Some thought he preached the gospel there: 1 Pet. iii. 19. ‘*Δι οὐδεν επερον εἰς ἀδου κατηλθεν η δια το εναγγελισασθαι.*’—CLEM. ALEX. Some, that he went to triumph. But to be sure he went, 1. To satisfy the law of the dead. ‘*Legem mortuorum servare.*’—IREN. As his body was buried as the bodies of sinners are; so his soul went where theirs are.

2. “ That we might not come there. ‘*Ideo ille parvenit usque ad Infernum ne nos remaneremus in Infernos.*’—AUG.

“ ‘*εισ τον αδην καταβαινων ημας ανεφερε.*’—ATHAN.”—Vide Bishop Beveridge’s *Thesaurus Theologicus*, vol. i. p. 147.

In this, as in every other *scrutiny* into the meaning of the hallowed words of scripture, may HE who has promised to “ teach the meek his way,” be pleased himself to give us the knowledge and impression of his will;

"that the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

It is of very little moment whether we be wise in criticism, profound in knowledge, or powerful in eloquence ; but it is our eternal ALL to have "*Christ formed in our hearts the hope of glory.*" "*Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, he will not tarry ; now the just shall live by faith.*"

(B.)

EXTRACTS from an Exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians by Dr. Thomas Goodwin in reference to the expression, Ephes. i. 21, 22. “*Far above all principality and power, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.*” “*ον μονον εν τω αιωνι τουτω, αλλα και εν τω μελλοντι.*”

“There is a *special* world, called the *world to come*, appointed for Jesus Christ eminently to reign in; and therefore, though all the other senses to which I have referred are true and good, yet let me *add* this to it; that God did not content himself to bestow this world upon Christ, for him to rule and reign in, and to order and dispose the affairs of it as he doth, and *after the day of judgment*, to reign in that sense you heard spoken of afore, for ever, more gloriously than he did before; but he hath appointed a *special world on purpose for him, between this world and the end of the day of judgment,* (and the day of judgment itself is *part of it, if not the whole of it,*) wherein our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ shall reign; which world the scripture eminently calleth the *world to come; Christ's world*, as I may so call it, that as this present world was ordained for the *first*

Adam, and God hath given it unto the sons of men ; so there is a *world to come* appointed for the second Adam, as the time *after* the day of judgment is God the Father's in a more eminent manner, who then '*shall be all in all*.'

"I will give you for this, two parallel places of scripture, Heb. ii. 5. compared likewise with 2 Pet. iii. 7. In Heb. ii. 5. '*To the angels (saith he) hath he not put in subjection the world to come?*' Whom hath he subjected it to then ? '*But (saith he) one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little while lower (so it is in the margin) than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.* Now we see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, by the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.'

"I will give you another place for it ; 2 Pet. iii. 7. compared with verse 13. '*The heavens and the earth which are now,* (here that which in the text the apostle calleth *this world*, is expressed by the "*heavens and the earth which are now,*) *by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire,' &c.* And verse 13, namely in opposition to the heavens and the earth which now are, mentioned, verse 7, he saith, '*Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*' The Jews, they still express *world* by saying *heaven and earth*; wherefore when the apostle would express this *world*, he calleth it *heaven and earth*, meaning the *world that now is*; but,

saith he, ‘we look for a *new heaven and a new earth*,’ that is, *a world to come*. Now the words which in Heb. ii. 5, the apostle useth to denote this *world to come*, are οὐκομενῆ την μελλονσαν, ‘*wherein dwelleth righteousness*.’

“....Now this world, when it is finished, shall not be subject to the angels; *but to Christ and his babes and sucklings*; to that Man, Christ Jesus, Lord paramount of it, for whom it was made; and those *citizens of this world*, as Pareus expresses it. Therefore Christ is called the *Captain of our salvation*; for he, in this, is a *common person*: and as he, by suffering, was *made a little while lower than the angels*, so are we to *suffer* with him; and having suffered with him, to *reign* with him.

“You do not read of the angels judging the world, and sitting upon the throne; the *saints* then shall reign, and reign on earth. They are said to *sit*, and to *sit on twelve thrones*. (Matt. xix.) And in Rev. xx. it is said, ‘*the thrones were set, and those that were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus sat upon them*.’ Therefore Christ promiseth to give the government of ten cities to him that had made his five talents ten. The *devils* will be shut out. He hath taken and locked out that great enemy. Those principalities are gone during that time: and seeing they are gone there needeth no principalities of good angels to oppose them.

“Will you have me speak what I think? I think this; that that *office* which the *angels* do in *this world* here below, men *risen from the dead* shall do to men that are *saints*. For the first part of this reign—of this kingdom of Christ—of this *world to come*; that world shall be subject, not to *angels*, but to *men*, after that *first resurrection*, which the 20th chapter of the Revelations

speaks of..... It is the observation of *Chrysostome* upon the place, admiring that that man that was the scorn of earth, so he was here below, and when he hung upon the cross, that was the derision of men; (*'You shall see no beauty in him, that we should desire him.'* as it is, Isaiah liii.) yet that God should take up this man, raise him up from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, and subject all principalities and powers under him, give him *this world*, a world to come in a special manner, and to reign likewise for ever and ever, *after the day of judgment*; to use him in all his great businesses, to judge the world by this man.

"If this, saith he, had been spoken of God, there had been no wonder, for all the nations of the world are but as a drop of a bucket to him; but to hear it spoken of a man, of a drop of that drop, one man out of all nations, who himself was but a drop, a tear when he was in the womb first, to raise up this babe, this suckling, thus to *still the enemy and the avenger*, to conquer death, to subdue angels, to have all principalities and power under him, and not to still them with *arms*, but with his mouth, *out of the mouths of babes and sucklings*; and to make a world thus on purpose for him: '*Oh how excellent is thy name in all the earth, and thy glory above the heavens!*'

"This was it that made the *Psalmist* himself admire at the Lord Jesus Christ, that God should thus visit him, carry him to those depths, make him a *little while* (as the word *βραχὺ* signifieth, as the orator saith, *hear me a little while*) lower than the angels, though a great deal, for measure, lower than they, to let him down to the lowest parts of the earth, to the uttermost hell, and lay all our sins upon him, and all his wrath. '*Lord,*

(saith he,) *what is man that thou visitest him?*" Visiting is sometimes put for visiting in anger, as Psalm lix. 5. So God visited Christ first, made him thus lower than the angels, in this sense, for a little while; and when he had done this, he visited him in favour as much; takes that broken man, shattered man, for his soul was broken, '*my heart is broken;*' (it is the expression that Christ himself useth in one of the *Psalms*;) takes him, and raiseth him up to heaven, crowneth him with glory and honour, setteth him in all that glory you have heard. *O what is man, and the son of man!* (he speaks of the nature of man as it is united to the God-head in Christ, foreseeing it by a spirit of prophecy,) *that thou shouldest visit him thus, first in anger, then in favour!* What is this babe, this suckling, that thou shouldest raise him up to this glory and honour!..... Yea, my brethren, let me add this to it also, that God doth take the *same world* that was *Adam's*, and make it *new and glorious*; the same creation groaneth for this new world, this new clothing; as we groan to be clothed upon, so doth this whole creation. And as God takes the same substance of man's nature, and ingrafteth the *new creature* upon it, the same man still; so he takes the *same world* and makes it a *new world*, a *world to come* for the *second Adam*. For the substance of the same world shall be restored to a glory which Adam could never have raised it unto, the same world that was lost in *Adam*. And this God will do before he hath done with it, and this RESTITUTION is '*the world to come.*'..... Read the Prophets, you shall find promises of strange and wonderful things, of glorious times; and that *here upon earth*, of all nations coming in to

Christ ; of all prosperity ; of the *mountain of the Lord set above all mountains*, &c.

" Disputing once with a Papist, he urged this upon me ; saith he, '*If the Church of Rome be not the true Church, and the Church to which all Churches shall submit, which hath had constant peace and prosperity, all riches, and glory, and honour, for this many hundred years ; how hath this ever been fulfilled to your Church, that all nations shall flow into it ; that it is a mountain set above all mountains ; that abundance of peace and prosperity is in it, which shall run down like a river ; whereas you, (saith he,) have been in persecution ?*' The truth is, my brethren, there is *no answer for it but one* ; that the time is yet to come. And this, one of their own, even *Horrerius a Jesuit*, (though himself was for the Church of *Rome*, and made the *prosperity* of it one note of the truth of that Church, yet) he acknowledgeth, seeing such glorious things spoken of the Church of Christ in this world, that it is *yet to be fulfilled*, and was *never yet fulfilled*, no, not in the *Roman Church*.

" So now you see, there is so much toward this *world to come* ; yea, and the truth is, thus far we find many divines fall in, yea, and find those that do acknowledge, that this state of glory, of a glorious Church on earth, shall continue for a thousand years, during which time the *Jews* shall have it, and the Gentiles together with them..... Now when Satan is gone, and is thus shut up for a thousand years, what is done for this thousand years ?

" Read Rev. xx. 4—7th verses. '*I saw thrones (saith he,) and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.*' What is judgment but *reigning*? And what

were they to whom judgment was given? ‘*I saw, (saith he,) the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God,* (namely in the primitive times, under the *Roman Empire,*) *and which had not received the mark of the beast upon their foreheads and in their hands; those which stood out unto the days of antichrist,* (which argueth that this is to fall out after the times of *antichrist* too,) *and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years; but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished; this is the first resurrection.*’ Now it is said, that the first resurrection is a spiritual resurrection of men’s souls from the death of sin, (such interpretations are put upon it.) But consider with yourselves a little: First, it is the souls of men *dead*; that is plain, for he saith, they were *slain with the sword*, they were *beheaded* for the witness of Jesus; and, as *their death is*, so must their *resurrection be*: their death was certainly a bodily death, for they were beheaded, therefore their resurrection must be answerable to it. *And, to mention no other arguments, they reigned with Christ a thousand years.* This is not the glory of heaven, for that is for ever; and so they had reigned from the first time they were slain, if that glory were meant; but they reign upon their rising, for he saith, ‘*the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were expired.*’ Therefore the opposition implieth, that it is a living again, and a proper resurrection.

“Now where do these reign? It should seem on earth, by this argument; because why else is the devil bound up? He need not be bound up for their reigning in heaven; but as a preparation to this, *the devil is bound up*, so the text saith. This is one place out

of which I could urge a multitude of things, but I forbear.

“ Well, I know not how to answer another, and that is that I quoted in my last discourse, (Rev. v. 10.) where the saints expressly say, in *John’s time*, ‘ *Thou hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests, and we shall reign* (not *we do*, but *we shall reign*,) *on earth.*’ And then join with this, (2 Pet. iii. 23.) ‘ *We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*’ We—we apostles—
we saints that *live now*, *we look for it.* How do I prove that? Because the use he makes of it is this; ‘ *Wherefore, brethren, seeing ye look for such things, be diligent to be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.*’ It could not be an argument then, in those times, to be holy and blameless, if they themselves, personally, were not to look for it; and he saith expressly, *seeing ye look for it.*

“ And what is that, according to his *promise*, they look for? *A new heaven and a new earth.* Not *heaven* itself properly taken: there is not a *new heaven to be made*, it is the old heaven, that was made from the foundation of the world, in which we shall for ever be with Christ after the day of judgment. However, how is there a new earth there? ‘ *We look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;*’ wherein righteousness reigneth and ruleth; because, (as I said before,) it will be a new world, subjected unto Jesus Christ when the *New Jerusalem* cometh down from heaven.

“ You will ask me now, What shall they do here in this world?

“ I shall give you such considerations as shall take off the absurdity. First, I will tell you what they shall not.

do. They shall not eat and drink, nor marry, nor give in marriage. Our Saviour saith expressly, that the *children of the resurrection do none of these things*. Therefore to imagine a *Turkish heaven* here below, a *Turkish paradise*, is that which hath been the absurdity put upon that opinion, and which indeed made many of the Fathers, after the first three hundred years, to fly out against. There was an opinion then, that Christ himself should then reign personally at *Jerusalem*, a thousand years; that they should abound in all sensual pleasures, in marrying wives, eating and drinking, &c.; and that the *Jewish ceremonies* should then be restored. And it was this opinion that the Fathers confuted and did so much fly out against; for otherwise the truth is, that *Austin* himself saith, ‘*that if you will grant only spiritual delights to come from heaven for them, it is an opinion (saith he) that may be tolerated.*’ And *Tertullian* saith the like in his third book against *Marcion*, which he wrote in his best time, before he turned *Montanist*; and he calleth it ‘*an heavenly kingdom upon earth, in abundance of heavenly good things.*’

“ I have told you what they do *not*; I will tell you what they do, and take off the absurdity of that likewise. He saith, ‘*They shall be kings and priests;*’ so Rev. v. 10. And chap. x. 6. ‘*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power,* (they are out of the danger of it, both body and soul being raised in a celestial estate,) *but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*’ To open this a little to you:

“ First, To be kings. You heard this in Heb. ii. 5. that he hath not put this world to come in *subjectio*n to

the angels. The angels now, they are the *thrones and principalities*, and the kings and the great ones that rule this world that is now. But the truth is, he saith they shall be kings then. He hath not put this New World into subjection unto the angels, but unto them. And for them to take the angel's office, to be as angels after this Resurrection, is no absurdity.

“ *They shall be priests.* I shall take off that absurdity by this: our Saviour Christ, when he took up his body here out of the grave, he continued forty days upon the earth: what did Christ Jesus all that while? He did perform the part of a priest and a prophet; he did instruct them in the worship of God, so you read expressly, Acts i. The Apostles (my brethren), had a brave teacher, *Christ risen from the dead*; he began this New World, and he remained forty days on earth afore he ascended on purpose. Now, think with yourselves, for the saints to be conformed to Jesus Christ their Lord and King, to run but through the same state he doth. He ran through this world, he was poor and miserable; so are you. When he died: ‘ *Father into thy hands I commend my spirit;*’ whither his soul went, ours go. When he rose again, and took up his body, and remained forty days upon the earth, he instructed his disciples in the great things of the kingdom of God. If the saints do so when they first take their bodies, here is but a conformity unto Christ. He then ascended, so shall they, and for ever be with the Lord.

“ Consider this further (for I shall mention all that doth alleviate it), the great objection lies in this, that the souls of men that now are in heaven, and see the face of God, should come down and do such a service as this to reign on earth here below, in such a glorious

church as I have told you ; here lieth the absurdity. To take this off, consider this, that even this estate will be a better estate than what their souls now have. I will give you reason for it ; for otherwise our Lord and Saviour Christ, when his body and soul was here also below, after his Resurrection, was not in a better estate, than his soul was before his Resurrection, which certainly it was. You will say, *They are now in heaven.* Yes, as the angels are ; but as the angels come down here below, and yet always see the face of their Father, (so saith the gospel, Matt. xviii. 20. *Their angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven,*) so may these still be in heaven, and behold the face of God. *Stephen*, you know, beheld the face of God, and the glory of God, and Christ standing on his right hand, though he was a mortal man, and here below.

" In one word let me say this : God hath eternity of time to reveal himself in, he doth advance his favourites by degrees ; first glorifieth their souls apart, takes soul and body, when they are united they have a better condition than the glorifying of their souls simply. How many of these ways hath God to manifest himself by degrees ; how many worlds to come he hath to do all, the more the better ; for you will say, You are so happy in every one, that you know not how to be happier, if he leadeth us by a kind of wonderment from one glory to another : as in masques you draw away one board, and a glorious sight appeareth ; you draw away another and another is presented to you ; so doth God with his children, because he hath an eternity of time to make all these shows and repre-

sentations to them, and in doing this he doth not lessen, but increase their happiness.

“ This is the greatest service that can be done, for it is the angel’s work, they do it now. And let me add this: then will come to be fulfilled that which you pray for in the Lord’s Prayer, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* At the day of judgment, during that time we are not so much doing God’s will as giving account of our ways of having performed it. If, therefore, this prayer be fully and exactly fulfilled, that the will of God shall be done on earth as completely as in heaven, it must be the time of the first Resurrection, which *Paul* therefore, when he would express his desire of being perfect, he saith, he would *attain to the resurrection of the dead*, that is, to be as holy as men shall be then.

“ My brethren, I have spoken these things unto you, rather as that which hath a great show of truth in it, than as if I could answer all objections that might be made against it. But (as I said in the last discourse) if this hold not, as it is exceeding probable it will, yet there is a fourth degree of this *world to come*, which I am sure will hold, and that is this, during the day of judgment strictly taken, after the *general resurrection*, both of *just* and *unjust*. Then, my brethren, to honour this New World, God will not only come down, but Jesus Christ himself will come down, and he will abide a long day here too; (therefore it is no absurdity for saints to live on earth, even when Christ himself shall do so;) neither will it diminish from his happiness at all, for he will come and bring all his glory with him.”—*Goodwin’s Works, folio, 1681, vol. i, Sermons 33, 34.*

The preceding "Enquiry" was nearly finished before I happened to look into this pious and learned commentary on the Ephesians. I was exceedingly struck by the similarity of Dr. Goodwin's views, with those which I have myself derived from Scripture; I refer especially to these 33 and 34 sermons.

Letter from the Learned Joseph Mede.

REV. CH. XX.

SIR,

Because this chapter contains matter of special moment, I will use the leave you gave me to represent in some void paper distinctly, but briefly, what I could hitherto conceive of this mystery.

1. That the reign of Christ here described is after the times of Antichrist (if either the beast or false prophet be he) is apparent without interpretation, both because all those times the old dragon Satan was not tied up, but at liberty to seduce the nations; and because (verse 4) one sort of those who should reign with Christ 1000 years, are said to be such as had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, nor had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands: which necessarily pre-supposeth the beast, his image, and marking, to have already been.

2. What the quality of this reign should be, which is so singularly *differenced* from the reign of Christ *hitherto*, is neither easy nor safe to determine, farther than,

that it should be the reign of our Saviour's victory over his enemies, wherein Satan, being bound up from deceiving the nations any more, till the time of his reign be fulfilled; the church should consequently enjoy a most blissful peace and happy security from the heretical apostasies and calamitous sufferings of former times. But here (if any where) *the known shipwrecks* of those who have been *too venturous* should make us *most wary and careful*, that we admit nothing into our imaginations which may cross or impeach any Catholic tenet of the Christian faith; as also to beware of gross and earthly conceits of an epicurean happiness misbe-seeming the spiritual purity of the saints. If we concieit any *Deliciae*, let them be *spirituales*, which St. Augustine confesseth to be *opinio tolerabilis et se hoc opinatum fuisse aliquando*, lib. 20. de Civit. Dei, cap. 7.

3. The PRESENCE of Christ in this kingdom shall no doubt be *glorious* and *evident*: yet I dare not so much as imagine (which some ancients seem to have thought) that it should be a *visible converse* upon earth. For the kingdom of Christ ever hath been and shall be *regnum caelorum*, a kingdom whose throne and kingly residence is in heaven. There He was installed when He sat down on the right hand of Majesty on high (Heb. i.) And there, as in his proper temple, is continually to appear in the presence of his Father, to make intercession for us (Rom. viii. 34, with Heb. ix. 24.) Yet may we grant HE shall appear and be *visibly revealed* from heaven, especially for the *calling and gathering* of his ancient people, for whom, in the days of old, He did so many wonders. This St. John, in this book, as our Saviour in the gospel seems to intimate, by joining those two prophetical passages of Dan. and

Zach. in one expression, ‘Behold He cometh in the clouds, and every Eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.’ The first part (which our Saviour expresses more fully by the sign of the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, &c.) is Daniel’s, in a vision of this kingdom we speak of, ‘Behold (saith He,) one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him.’ The other part is out of Zachariah, prophesying of the recalling of the Jews. ‘And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.’ though these words of Zachariah are not in our Saviour’s expression, but instead thereof, that which immediately follows after them, that all the tribes of the earth (or land) should mourn. Now, I cannot understand how these two prophetical passages should not have the same meaning, when our Saviour and his Apostle allege them joined, which they have in their own authors expressed apart; or being expressed together as one, should not be fulfilled at once. By such a miraculous apparition of CHRIST from heaven was Saint Paul converted; and I hope it is no heresy to think that the whole nation of the Jews, those Zelots against Christ, may be converted by as strange a means as was that one Zelot of their nation.

4. Those who shall be partakers of this kingdom, are described to be of two sorts; 1. The deceased martyrs, who (as far as I can yet understand it,) shall resume their bodies and reign in heaven; 2. Such of the living as have not worshipped the beast nor his image, have neither received his mark, &c. these shall reign on

earth. For so I construe the words : ‘ I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for not word of God, and (subaudi, I saw,) those which had worshipped the beast, nor his image, nor had received his mark upon their foreheads, and they lived (that is the martyrs,) and reigned (that is both of them,) with Christ a thousand years.’

5. Under the *second sort* of those Reigners, together with the Virgin-Christians of the Gentiles (who are the surrogate *Israel*,) I would, in a particular respect, understand the nation of the *Jews* then converted to the faith of Christ, who coming in towards the end of the day, may, above all others, be said to be those who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, nor had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands ; which most of the Christian *Gentiles* had done, and therefore, at the time of their cleansing, (ch. xv. 2.) are rather described, ‘ *Those that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.*’

6. *The rising of the martyrs* is that which is called the *first resurrection*, being, as it seems, a prerogative to their sufferings above the rest of the dead, who, as they suffered with *Christ* in the time of his patience ; so should they be glorified with him in the reign of his victory, before the *universal resurrection* of all. ‘ *Blessed and holy are they who have part in the first resurrection, for on them the second death hath no power ;*’ namely, because they are not *in via*, but *in patria* ; being a prerogative, as I understand it, of this *first sort* of reigners only, and not of the *second*. Thus I yet admit the *first resurrection* to be corporal, as well as the *second*, though I confess *I have much striven against it* ; and if the text

would admit another sense more free of paradox, I had yet rather listen to it, but *I find it not.* However, to grant a *particular resurrection* before the *general* is against no article of faith : for the gospel tells us, (Matt. xxvii. 52, 53,) that at our Saviour's resurrection '*the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.*' Neither was the number of them a small number, if we may credit the fathers, or the most ancient records of Christian tradition ; for of this was that famous saying, '*that Christ descended alone but ascended with a multitude ;*' which is found in the heads of the sermon of *Thaddeus*, as they are reported by *Eusebius*, out of the Syriac records of the city of Edessa, (lib. i. cap. ult.) in *Ignatius's epistle to the Trallians*, and in the disputation of *Macarius*, Bishop of Jerusalem ; in the first general Council of *Nice* ; also in *Cyril's Catechism* ; nay this *Cyril* of Jerusalem, *Chrysostome*, and others, suppose this resurrection to have been *common to all the saints* that died before our Saviour, (see the Bishop of Meath, '*de Limbo Patrum.*') However it be, it holds no *unfit proportion* with this supposed of the martyrs. And how it doth more impeach any article of our faith, to think *that may be* of the martyrs, which we believe of the patriarchs, I yet see not.

7. The second resurrection to be after the end of the thousand years, *Justin Martyr* by way of distinction calleth, *την καθολικην και αιωνιαν ομοθυμαδον αμα παντων αναστασιν*, "the eternal and universal resurrection of all together," namely in respect of the former, which was *particular*, and but of some. And that it is common both to the godly and to the wicked, and not of the wicked only, may appear in that there are *two books* opened for

the dead, (v. 12.) whereof one is *the book of life*, which argues two sorts of dead to be judged. Nor can I imagine how it can be otherwise, unless all the just which live during the thousand years be supposed to be *immortal*; which is a paradox I dare not admit, understanding not that all the individuals, but that the body of the Church here on earth should successively reign with Christ, her Lord, a thousand years. Besides the attempt of the nations *after* Satan's loosing, argues a state subject to mutability. As for those words of verse 14, which seem to intimate no other dead then judged but the wicked, because it is said, that '*death and hades were cast into the lake of fire*,' which is the second death; I suppose nothing else is meant thereby, but that death was now *quite vanquished*; and that there should be no more death of body or separation of soul; but only the second death: as if it had been said, *Death and hades are now confined only to the lake of fire*, which is the second *death*; but the former death of bodies in the grave, and the state of separate souls in *hades* was no more.*

*Extracts from Mede's Commentary on the
Revelations.*

"**JUSTIN MARTYR** declares 'Thus speaks Ezek. lxx. 17, of the time of those thousand years. *For there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, neither shall they come into their*

* Vid. *παραλειπομένα*, by Joseph Mede, p. 22.

minds ; but they shall find joy and rejoicing in those which I create. For behold I make Jerusalem to triumph, and my people to rejoice ; and so forth to the end of the chapter. But of that *for the days of my people shall be as the days of a tree*, he addeth ; In these words we understand that the thousand years are secretly pointed at. For, as it was said to Adam, that in the day that he should eat of the tree, in that same day also he should die ; we know he did not accomplish a thousand years. We know also (saith he,) that saying, *that a day with the Lord is a thousand years*, is to our purpose. Moreover, a certain man with us, whose name is *John*, being one of the twelve apostles of Christ, in that revelation which was showed to him, hath prophesied that our faithful fellow-members of Christ, should accomplish those thousand years at Jerusalem, and that then the *general*, and, that I may speak it in a word, the everlasting resurrection and last judgment of all shall jointly happen together ; the same which also our Lord spake, '*that they shall neither marry, nor be given in marriage, but shall be equal with the angels ; even sons of the resurrection of God.*'

" *Carpentarius*, in his Commentary upon *Plato* his *Alcinons* p. 332, affirmeth that the 7th millennium is called by the whole school of the Cabbalists, *The great Day of Judgment* ; because then (saith he,) they suppose that God will judge the souls of all men. By the name of the Cabbalists (if I be not mistaken,) he pointeth at the doctors of the *Talmud*, with many of whom it is manifest, that this tradition was frequent ; for we read in *Gemara Ganedria, Perek, Chelek* ; *R. Ketina* said, *the world doth continue six thousand years, and in one it shall be destroyed* ; of which it is said, ' *and the Lord*

only shall be exalted in that day.' But he understandeth it of that destruction which shall be by fire, whereby the world shall be purified as gold, and shall be freed from the servitude of the curse, under which it groaneth by reason of man's sin, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. (Rom. viii. 22.) It followeth a little after, (from the same Gemara,) '*Tradition agreeth with R. Ketina; even as every seventh year of seven years is a year of release; so of the seven thousand years of the world, the seventh thousand year shall be the millenary of release,* as it is said, *And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.* Likewise the 92d Psalm, (in the title,) is said to be *A Psalm, or Song, for the Sabbath Day;* that is, *the day that is nothing else but rest.* Again it is said in the 90th Psalm, '*For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday.*'

" Here let the reader note two things; *first*, that the ancient Jews did understand that prophecy in the 2d of Ezekiel, where these words, '*And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day,*' are twice found, of the day of the great judgment, and the kingdom of Christ; whose steps our later *Rabbins* have seemed to follow. The *other* observable thing is, that the *title* of Psalm xcii, doth appertain to the *argument* of the Psalm, and ought to be understood of the sabbatism of the thousand years.

" And now I suppose it is manifestly proved out of these *Rabbins*, that the ancient Jews did *define that day* which they called *the day of judgment*, to be *the space of a thousand years.*

" R. Saadias (among those *Rabbins* they call excellent,) upon the 7th chap. of Daniel, thus speaks, '*and the judgment is set and the books opened,*' that is,

the day of judgment, as it is written, Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven.' Likewise 'And the Lord of Hosts shall be exalted in judgment. Again, therefore, wait you for me, saith the Lord : that is the great day at which God will rise to judgment. And know thou that (the judgment is set and the books are opened,) which I have declared formerly of the day of judgment and time of visitation ; there shall be a day wherein all the actions of the sons of men, both quick and dead, shall be searched into.' The same R. Saadias on v. 8 ; *'The saints of the most High shall receive a kingdom, that is, because the children of Israel have rebelled against the Lord, their kingdom shall be taken from them, and shall be given to those four monarchies which shall possess the kingdom in this world, and shall lead Israel captive, and subdue it to them, even till the world to come, until the Messiah reign.'*

" Consult with that of Luke xxi. 25, to wit *the Jews shall be led captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled. Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, &c.*

" And that of Tertullian against Marcion, in his 5th book and 10th chapter. *'Christ, the High Priest of the Gentiles, will vouchsafe to bless the circumcision, the posterity of Abraham, at his last coming, when they shall know him.'*

" With this agreeth that which we find written in the book Berachoth. Ben Zuma saith, *'It shall come to pass that Israel shall not remember their departure out of the land of Egypt, in the world to come, and in the days of the Messiah. And how doth this ap-*

pear? That which is written in Jeremy (chap. xxiii.) will prove it. Behold the days come, and they shall say no more, the Lord liveth which brought the children of Israel up out of the land of Egypt, &c. Of which wise men will have the meaning to be, not as if the name of Egypt should be blotted out (or forgotten,) but because the wonders which shall be effected in the days of the kingdom of the Messiah (that is, when he shall destroy the kingdoms of the world,) shall principally be remembered, and their departure out of the land of Egypt shall be less spoken of.'

" By these and the like passages, let the reader learn why *St. Jerome* doth so much charge the *Millennaries* with *Judaism*: whereon he so earnestly insisteth, that this may seem to be his prime argument whereby he may convince the error of that opinion. But, however, touching that opinion, whether it be true or false, and whether those Fathers were in an error or no; certes to be of the same mind with a *Jew* is not always culpable; but if otherwise, why do we not explode the *world to come, hell, and paradise?* Do not we *Christians* agree with the *Jew* in these things? Have we not the names likewise of the *kingdom of heaven, and the day of judgment*, from the *Jewish Rabbins*? For where are those things read in the canon of the Old Testament? which yet are very frequent among the *Jewish doctors*.

" Moreover, who is he, that hearing the opinion of the ancient *Jews* touching the one thousand years of the day of judgment, can chuse but think with himself, that he is moved to believe that the apostle Peter with them (for both his Epistles are directed to the *Jews*,) speaking of the day of judgment, and presently after

the mentioning thereof, adding, ‘*You are not ignorant that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years,*’ would confirm the tradition of the *Rabbins* touching that matter? Especially when those words do not seem to be taken out of the Psalm (as the common opinion is) but out of the *vulgar* form and manner of the Jews making mention of the *day of judgment*. Yea, He will further demand the reason why, unless Christ the Lord and his apostles had owned the name of *the day of judgment* being derived from the *Rabbins*, in the same sense with them, they have *not* somewhere, no not so much as in one word declared it? For is it not a dangerous matter, yea, the high way, to deceive men, to use (in doctrine) the words and phrases of such as are erroneous, *without all caution and note of dissent?*

“ Seeing these things are so, I leave it to the judgment of learned men, and men well able to judge of such like mysteries in divinity, whether this be not the best and easiest way to deal with the past; not to wrest *those plain prophecies touching things appertaining to the last and glorious coming of the Messiah, to his first coming;* but to persuade them that they expect none other *Messiah* who can fulfil all those things, *viz.* changing those things that are to be changed (for a Christian must consent no farther with the Jews in any thing than his Christian faith doth give him leave,) than *that Jesus of Nazareth*, whom their fathers have crucified, that which the Apocalypse, in so many places and so carefully doth inculcate. ‘*Behold* (saith the Revelation not far from the beginning,) (*Jesus Christ*, the first begotten from the dead, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood,) ‘*He cometh in the clouds, and every eye shall see him, even they that have crucified*

him, and all tribes of the earth shall mourn before him. I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, saith the Lord, which is and which was, and which is to come. Likewise, whilst it ascribeth that *royal kingdom* to the Lamb, namely, *to Jesus that was slain*, as in the 7th chapter concerning the multitude with the palms in their hands; *the Lamb shall feed them, &c.* In the 17th chapter, 14th verse, *The Lamb shall overcome them*, because He is **LORD of LORDS and KING of KINGS**, (Chap. xix. 7.) ‘*The marriage of the Lamb is come.*’ (Chap. xxi. 9.) Speaking of the *New Jerusalem*; ‘*I will show thee the Bride of the Lamb.*’ And in verse 23, ‘*the Lamb is the light thereof.*’ For whilst that we wrest those plain prophecies, touching things that shall be at the *second coming* of Christ, to his *first coming*, the Jews laugh at us, and are hardened in their infidelity.

“ The Apostle Peter taketh this course to convert the Jews, unless I be much mistaken. (Acts iii. 19.) *Repent*, saith he, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of **REFRESHING** shall come from the presence of the Lord, and He shall **SEND JESUS CHRIST**, which was preached unto you; **WHOM** the heavens must receive **UNTIL** the **TIMES OF RESTITUTION** of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all **HIS HOLY PROPHETS.**”*

* Mede's Com. on Rev. translated by Moore, p. 128—137.

Extracts from Bishop Newton's Work on the Prophecies.

" IN the general, that there shall be such a happy period as the millennium; that the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; (Dan. vii. 27.) that Christ shall have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; (Psalm ii. 8.) that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea: (Isa. xi. 9.) that the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved; (Rom. xi. 25, 26.) in a word, that the kingdom of heaven shall be established upon earth, is the plain and express doctrine of Daniel and *all* the prophets, as well as of St. John: and we daily pray for the accomplishment of it in praying, Thy kingdom come. But of all the prophets, St. John is the only one who hath declared particularly and in express terms, that the martyrs shall rise to partake of the felicities of this kingdom, and that it shall continue upon earth a thousand years: and the Jewish Church before him, and the Christian Church after him, have farther believed and taught that these thousand years will be the seventh millenary of the world.

" Of the Christian writers, St. Barnabas in the first century, thus comments upon those words of Moses, ' And God made in six days the works of his hands, and he finished them on the seventh day, and he rested

in it, and sanctified it. Consider, children, what that signifies, He finished them in six days. This it signifies, that the Lord God will finish all things in six thousand years. For a day with him is a thousand years, as he himself testifies, saying, Behold, this day shall be as a thousand years.—Therefore, children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, shall all things be consummated. And he rested the seventh day; this signifies, that when his Son shall come, and shall abolish the season of the wicked one, and shall judge the ungodly, and shall change the sun, and the moon, and the stars, then he shall rest gloriously in that seventh day.' Justin Martyr, in the second century, declares the millennium to be the catholic doctrine of his time. 'I, and as many as are orthodox Christians, in all respects do acknowledge, that there shall be a resurrection of the flesh, (meaning the first resurrection,) and a thousand years in Jerusalem, rebuilt, and adorned, and enlarged, (that is, in the New Jerusalem,) as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah, and others unanimously attest.' Afterwards he subjoins, 'A certain man among us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, in a revelation made to him, did prophecy, that the faithful believers in Christ, should live a thousand years in the New Jerusalem, and after these, should be the general resurrection and judgment;' which is an early attestation to the genuineness and authenticity of the book of the Revelation; for Justin was converted to Christianity about thirty years after the death of St. John, at which time, probably, many were alive who had known and remembered the apostle. Tertullian, at the beginning of the third century, professeth his belief of the kingdom promised to the saints upon earth, of their resurrection for a thou-

sand years, of their living in the New Jerusalem, and therein enjoying all spiritual delights, and of the destruction of the world, and the general judgment after the thousand years ; and his books of Paradise, and of the Hope of the Faithful, if they had not been lost or suppressed, might have afforded ampler proofs of all these particulars. Lactantius, at the beginning of the fourth century, is very copious upon this subject in the seventh book of his Divine Institutions. He saith, ‘Because all the works of God were finished in six days, it is necessary that the world should remain in this state six ages ; that is, six thousand years.’ And again, ‘Because having finished the works, he rested on the seventh day and blessed it ; it is necessary, that at the end of the six thousandth year all wickedness should be abolished out of the earth, and justice should reign for a thousand years.’ He saith, ‘When the Son of God shall have destroyed injustice, and shall have restored the just to life, he shall be conversant among men a thousand years, and shall rule them with most just government. At the same time the Prince of devils shall be bound with chains, and shall be in custody the thousand years of the heavenly kingdom, while justice shall reign in the world, lest he should attempt any evil against the people of God.’ He saith, ‘When the thousand years of the kingdom, that is, seven thousand years, shall draw towards a conclusion, Satan shall be loosed again ; and when the thousand years shall be completed, then shall be that second and public resurrection of all, wherein the unjust shall be raised to everlasting torments :’ and having enlarged upon these topics, he concludes, ‘This is the doctrine of the holy prophets which we Christians follow, this is our wisdom.’

In short, the doctrine of the millennium was *generally believed in the three first and purest ages*; and this belief, as the learned Dodwell hath justly observed, was one principal cause of the fortitude of the primitive Christians; they even coveted martyrdom, in hopes of being partakers of the privileges and glories of the martyrs in the first resurrection.

"Afterwards the doctrine grew into disrepute, for various reasons. Some, both Jewish and Christian writers, have debased it with a mixture of fables; they have described the kingdom more like a sensual, than a spiritual kingdom, and thereby, they have not only exposed themselves, but (what is infinitely worse) the doctrine itself, to contempt and ridicule. It has suffered by the misrepresentations of its enemies, as well as by the indiscretions of its friends; many, like Jerome, have charged the millennarians with absurd and impious opinions which they never held; and, rather than they would admit the truth of the doctrine, they have not scrupled to call in question the genuineness of the book of the Revelation. It hath been abused even to worse purposes; it hath been made an engine of faction, and turbulent fanatics, under the pretence of saints, have aspired to dominion, and disturbed the peace of civil society. Besides, wherever the influence and authority of the church of Rome have extended, she hath endeavoured by all means to discredit this doctrine, and, indeed, not without sufficient reason, this kingdom of Christ being founded on the ruins of the kingdom of antichrist. No wonder, therefore, that this doctrine lay depressed for many ages, but it sprang up again at the Reformation, and will flourish together with the study of the Revelation. All the danger is, on one side, of pruning

and lopping it too short ; and on the other, of suffering it to grow too wild and luxuriant. Great caution, soberness, and judgment are required to keep the middle course. We should neither, with some, interpret it into an allegory, nor depart from the literal sense of scripture, without absolute necessity for so doing. Neither should we, with others, indulge an extravagant fancy, nor explain too curiously *the manner* and circumstances of this future state. It is safest and best, faithfully to adhere to the *words of scripture, or to fair deductions from scripture* ; and to rest contented with the general account, till time shall accomplish and eclaircise all the particulars.”

“ The New Jerusalem shall be the habitation of the saints of the first resurrection, and it shall be also the habitation of the saints of the general resurrection. The Church of Christ shall endure through all times and changes in this world, and likewise in the world to come ; it shall be glorious upon earth during the millennium, and it shall be more glorious still in *the new earth after the millennium* to all eternity. Earth shall then become as heaven, or rather it shall be *a heaven upon earth*, God dwelling visibly among men.”

“ Many, however, I know, both ancients and moderns, make the millennium *synochrize with the new heavens and the new earth* ; and some latitude of interpretation may be well allowed in these mysterious points of futurity. It is not our business to frame theories and to invent hypotheses, but *faithfully to follow the word of God* as our surest guide, without *regarding much the authority of men*. Lactantius affirms, that, ‘ when the thousand years shall be completed, the world shall be renewed by God, and the heavens shall

be folded up, and the earth shall be changed.' And St. Austin also declares, 'that the judgment being finished, then this heaven and this earth shall cease to be, when the new heaven and the new earth shall begin to be. For by a *mutation of things* this world will *pass away* not by an utter *extinction*. Whence also the apostle says, (1 Cor. vii. 31.) that the *fashion of this world passeth away*.' And, indeed, why should the new heaven and the new earth be destroyed when there shall be no more sin, when *there shall be no more curse*, when *there shall be no more death*? *The heaven and the earth of old* (2 Pet. iii. 5.) for the *wickedness of man, perished by water; the heaven and the earth which are now are reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men*; but why should not *the new heaven and the new earth* be preserved, *wherein dwelleth righteousness?*"

"It is, I conceive, to these great events, the fall of antichrist, the re-establishment of the Jews, and the beginning of the glorious millennium, that the three different dates in Daniel of 1260 years, 1290 years, and 1335 years, are to be referred (Dan. xii. 12.) '*Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the 1335 years;*' so St. John saith (Rev. xx. 6.) '*Blessed and holy is He that hath part in the first resurrection.*' Blessed and happy indeed will be this period; and it is very observable that the martyrs and confessors of Jesus in popish, as well as in pagan times, *will be raised to partake of this felicity*. Then shall all those gracious promises in the Old Testament be fulfilled, of the amplitude and extent, of the peace and prosperity, of the glory and happiness of the church in the latter days. Then in the full sense of the words (Rev. xi. 15,) '*shall the kingdoms of this world*

become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.' According to tradition, these thousand years of the reign of Christ, and the saints will be the seventh millenary of the world ; for, as God created the world in six days, and rested on the seventh, so the world, it is argued, will continue six thousand years, and the seventh thousand will be the great *Sabbatism* or holy rest to the people of God ; '*one day being with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,*' (2 Pet. iii. 8.) According to tradition too, these thousand years of the reign of Christ and the saints, are *the great day of judgment* ; in the morning or beginning whereof shall be the *coming* of Christ in flaming fire, and the particular judgment of antichrist, and the first resurrection ; and the evening or conclusion whereof shall be the *general* resurrection of the dead, *small and great*, and *they shall be judged every man according to their works.*'

" Prudence as well as modesty requires that we should forbear all *curious* enquiries into the nature and condition of this future kingdom ; as *how* Satan should be bound for a thousand years, and *afterwards* loosed again : *how the raised saints* shall cohabit with the *living*, and *judge* and *govern* the world ; *how* Christ shall *manifest* himself to them, and reign among them ; *how* the new Jerusalem, the city and church of the living God, shall *descend from heaven to earth* ; *how* Satan shall at last deceive the nations, and what nations they shall be. These are points which the Holy Spirit hath not thought fit to explain ; and folly may easily ask more questions than wisdom can answer. Wisdom in the mysterious things of God, and especially in the mysterious things of futurity, will still adhere to the words of

Scripture ; and having seen the completion of so many particulars, will rest contented with believing that *these* also *shall* be without knowing *how* they shall be.”*

*Extract from a Sermon by Dr. Chalmers, entitled
“The New Heavens and the New Earth.”*

2 PETER, III. 13.

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

“THERE is a limit to the revelations of the bible about futurity, and it were a mental or spiritual trespass to go beyond it. The reserve which it maintains in its informations, we also ought to maintain in our inquiries—satisfied to know little on every subject, where it has communicated little ; and feeling our way into regions which are at present unseen, no further than the light of scripture will carry us.

“ But while we attempt not to be ‘wise above that which is written,’ we should attempt, and that most studiously, to be wise up to that which is written. The disclosures are very few and very partial, which are given to us of that bright and beautiful economy which is to survive the ruins of our present one. But still there are such disclosures ; and on the principle of the things that are revealed belonging unto us, we have a

* Vide Newton on the Prophecies, vol. ii. p. 351, 396.

right to walk up and down for the purpose of observation, over the whole actual extent of them.

" What is made known of the details of immortality, is but small in the amount ; nor are we furnished with the materials of any thing like a graphical or picturesque exhibition of its abodes of blessedness. But still somewhat is made known, and which, too, may be addressed to a higher principle than curiosity, being, like every other scripture, ' profitable both for doctrine and for instruction in righteousness.'

" In the text before us, there are two leading points of information, whch we should like successively to remark upon. The first is, that in the new economy which is to be reared for the accommodation of the blessed, there will be *materialism* ; not merely *new heavens*, but also *a new earth*. The second is, that as distinguished from the present, which is an abode of *rebellion*, it will be an abode of *righteousness*.

" I. We know, historically, that earth, that a solid, material earth, may form the dwelling of sinless creatures, in full converse and friendship with the Being who made them ; that, instead of a place of exile for outcasts, it may have a broad avenue of communication with the spiritual world, for the descent of ethereal beings from on high ; that, like the member of an extended family, it may share in the regard and attention of the other members, and along with them be gladdened by the presence of him who is the Father of them all. To inquire how this can be, were to attempt a wisdom beyond scripture ; but to assert that this *has been*, and therefore *may be*, is to keep most strictly and modestly within the limits of the record : for we there read, that God framed an apparatus of materialism, which, on his

own surveying, he pronounced to be all very good, and the leading features of which may still be recognised among the things and the substances that are around us: and that he created man with the bodily organs and senses which we now wear; and placed him under the very canopy that is over our heads; and spread around him a scenery, perhaps lovelier in its tints, and more smiling and serene in the whole aspect of it, but certainly made up, in the main, of the same objects that still compose the prospect of our visible contemplations. And there, working with his hands in a garden, and with trees on every side of him, and even with animals sporting at his feet, was this inhabitant of earth, in the midst of all those earthly and familiar accompaniments, in full possession of the best immunities of a citizen of heaven, sharing in the delight of angels, and while he gazed on the very beauties which we ourselves gaze upon, rejoicing in them most as the tokens of a present and presiding Deity. It were venturing on the region of conjecture to affirm, whether, if Adam had not fallen, the earth that we now tread upon would have been the everlasting abode of him and his posterity. But certain it is that man, at the first, had for his place this world, and, at the same time, for his privilege, an unclouded fellowship with God, and, for his prospect, an immortality which death was neither to intercept nor put an end to. He was *terrestrial* in respect of *condition*, and yet *celestial* in respect both of *character and enjoyment*. His eye looked outwardly on a landscape of earth, while his heart breathed upwardly in the love of heaven. And though he trod the solid platform of our world, and was compassed about with its horizon; still was he within the circle of God's favoured creation, and took his place

among the freemen and the denizens of the great spiritual commonwealth.

" This may serve to rectify an imagination, of which we think that all must be conscious ; as if the grossness of materialism was only for those who had degenerated into the grossness of sin ; and that, when a spiritualizing process had purged away all our corruption, then, by the stepping stones of a death and a resurrection, we should be borne away to some ethereal region, where sense, and body, and all in the shape, either of audible sound, or of tangible substance, were unknown. And hence that strangeness of impression which is felt by you, should the supposition be offered, that in the place of eternal blessedness there will be ground to walk upon, or scenes of luxuriance to delight the corporeal senses, or the kindly intercourse of friends talking familiarly, and by articulate converse together, or, in short, any thing that has the least resemblance to a local territory, filled with various accommodations, and peopled over its whole extent by creatures formed like ourselves, having bodies such as we now wear, and faculties of perception, and thought, and mutual communication, such as we now exercise. The common imagination that we have of paradise on the other side of death, is, that of a lofty aerial region, where the inmates float in ether, or are mysteriously suspended upon nothing ; where all the warm and sensible accompaniments which give such an expression of strength, and life, and colouring, to our present habitation, are attenuated into a sort of spiritual element, that is meagre, and imperceptible, and utterly uninviting to the eye of mortals here below ; where every vestige of materialism is done away, and nothing left but certain unearthly scenes that have

no power of allurement, and certain unearthly ecstacies, with which it is felt impossible to sympathize. The holders of this imagination forget all the while that really there is no essential connexion between materialism and sin ; that the world we now inhabit, had all the amplitude and solidity of its present materialism before sin entered into it ; that God so far, on that account, from looking slightly upon it, after it had received the last touch of his creating hand, reviewed the earth, and the waters, and the firmament, and all the green herbage, with the living creatures, and the man whom he had raised in dominion over them ; and he saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was all very good. They forget that on the birth of materialism, when it stood out in the freshness of those glories which the great Architect of nature had impressed upon it, that then ‘the morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.’ They forget the appeals that are made everywhere in the Bible to this material workmanship ; and how, from the face of these visible heavens, and the garniture of this earth that we tread upon, the greatness and the goodness of God are reflected on the view of his worshippers. No, my brethren, the object of the administration we sit under is to *extirpate sin*, but it is not to *sweep away materialism*. By the convulsions of the last day, it may be shaken, and broken down from its present arrangements, and thrown into such fitful agitations as that the whole of its existing framework shall fall to pieces, and with a heat so fervent as to melt its most solid elements, may it be utterly dissolved. And thus may the earth again become without form, and void, but without one particle of its substance going into annihilation. Out of the ruins of

this second chaos may another heaven and another earth be made to arise; and a new materialism, with other aspects of magnificence and beauty, emerge from the wreck of this mighty transformation, and the world be peopled as before, with the varieties of material loveliness, and space be again lighted up into a firmament of material splendor.

* * * * *

" But the highest homage that we know of to materialism, is that which God, manifest in the flesh, has rendered to it. That he, the Divinity, should have wrapped his unfathomable essence in one of its coverings, and expatiated amongst us in the palpable form and structure of a man ; and that he should have chosen such a tenement, not as a temporary abode, but should have borne it with him to the place which he now occupies, and where he is now employed in preparing the mansions of his followers ; that he should have entered within the veil, and be now seated at the right hand of the Father, with the very body which was marked by the nails upon his cross, and wherewith he ate and drank after his resurrection ; that he who repelled the imagination of his disciples, as if they had seen a spirit, by bidding them handle him and see, and subjecting to their familiar touch, the flesh and the bones that encompassed him ; that he should be now throned in universal supremacy, and wielding the whole power of heaven and earth, have every knee to bow at his name, and every tongue to confess, and yet all to the glory of God the Father ; that humanity, that substantial and embodied humanity, should thus be exalted, and a voice of adoration from every creature, be lifted

up to the Lamb for ever and ever ; does this look like the abolition of materialism, after the present system of it is destroyed ? or does it not rather prove, that, transplanted into another system, it will be preferred to celestial honours, and prolonged in immortality throughout all ages ?

"It has been our careful endeavour, in all that we have said, to keep within the limits of the record, and to offer no other remarks than those which may fitly be suggested by the circumstance, that a new earth is to be created, as well as a new heavens, for the future accommodation of the righteous. We have no desire to push the speculation beyond what is written ; but it were, at the same time, well, that in all our representations of the immortal state, there was just the same force of colouring, and the same vivacity of scenic exhibition, that there is in the New Testament. The imagination of a total and diametric opposition between the region of sense and the region of spirituality, certainly *tends to abate the interest* with which we might otherwise look to the perspective that is on the other side of the grave ; and to deaden all those sympathies that we else might have with the joys and the exercises of the blest in Paradise. To rectify this, it is not necessary to enter on the particularities of heaven ; a topic on which the Bible is certainly most sparing and reserved in its communications. But a great step is gained, simply by dissolving the alliance that exists in the minds of many between the two ideas of sin and materialism ; or proving that when once sin is done away, it consists with all we know of God's administration, that materialism shall be perpetuated in the full bloom and vigour of immortality. It altogether holds out a warmer and more

alluring picture of the elysium that awaits us, when told, that there will be beauty to delight the eye, and music to regale the ear ; and the comfort that springs from all the charities of intercourse between man and man, holding converse as they do on earth, and gladdening each other with the benignant smiles that play on the human countenance, or the accents of kindness that fall in soft and soothing melody from the human voice. There is much of the innocent, and much of the inspiring, and much to affect and elevate the heart, in the scenes and the contemplations of materialism ; and we do hail the information of our text, that after the dissolution of its present frame-work, it will again be varied and decked out anew in all the graces of its unfading verdure, and of its unbounded variety : that in addition to our direct and personal view of the Deity, when He comes down to tabernacle with men, we shall also have the reflection of him in a lovely mirror of his own workmanship ; and that, instead of being transported to some abode of dimness and of mystery, so remote from human experience, as to be beyond all comprehension, we shall walk for ever in a land replenished with those sensible delights, and those sensible glories, which, we doubt not, will lie most profusely scattered over the ‘ new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.’

“ II. But though a paradise of sense, it will not be a paradise of sensuality. Though not so unlike the present world as many apprehend it, there will be one point of total dissimilarity betwixt them. It is not the entire substitution of spirit for matter, that will distinguish the future economy from the present. But it will be the entire substitution of righteousness for sin.

It is this which signalizes the Christian from the Mahometan paradise; not that sense and substance, and splendid imagery, [and the glories of a visible creation seen with bodily eyes, are excluded from it; but that all which is vile in principle, or voluptuous in impurity, will be utterly excluded from it. There will be a firm earth, as we have at present, and a heaven stretched over it, as we have at present; and it is not by the absence of these, but by the absence of sin, that the abodes of immortality will be characterized. There will both be heavens and earth, it would appear, in the next great administration; and with this speciality, to mark it from the present one, that it will be a heavens and an earth, ‘wherein dwelleth righteousness.’

“Now, though the first topic of information that we educed from the text, may be regarded as not very practical, yet the second topic on which I now insist, is most eminently so. Were it the great characteristic of that spirituality which is to obtain in a future heaven, that it was a spirituality of essence, then occupying and pervading the place from which materialism had been swept away, we could not, by any possible method, approximate the condition we are in at present, to the condition we are to hold everlastingly.

“We cannot etherealize the matter that is around us; neither can we attenuate our own bodies, nor bring down the slightest degree of such a heaven to the earth that we now inhabit. But when we are told that materialism is to be kept up, and that the spirituality of our future state lies not in the kind of substance which is to compose its frame-work, but in the character of those who people it—this puts, if not the fulness of heaven, at least a foretaste of heaven, within our reach.

We have not to strain at a thing so impracticable, as that of diluting the material economy which is without us—we have only to reform the moral economy that is within us. We are now walking on a terrestrial surface, not more compact, perhaps, than the one we shall hereafter walk upon; and are now wearing terrestrial bodies, not firmer and more solid, perhaps, than those we shall hereafter wear. It is not by working any change upon them, that we could realize, to any extent, our future heaven. And this is simply done by opening the door of our heart for the influx of heaven's affections, by bringing the whole man, as made up of soul, and spirit, and body, under the presiding authority of heaven's principles.

"This will make plain to you how it is, that it could be said in the New Testament, that the "kingdom of heaven was at hand;" and how, in that book, its place is marked out, not by locally pointing to any quarter, and saying, Lo here, or lo there, but by the simple affirmation that the kingdom of heaven is within you; and how, in defining what it was that constituted the kingdom of heaven, there is an enumeration, not of such circumstances as make up an outward condition, but of such feelings and qualities as make up a character, even righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; and how the ushering in of the new dispensation is held equivalent to the introduction of this kingdom into the world; all making it evident, that if the purity and the principles of heaven begin to take effect upon our heart, what is essentially heaven begins with us, even in this world: that instead of ascending to some upper region, for the purpose of entering it, it may descend upon us, and make an actual entrance of itself

into our bosoms ; and that so far, therefore, from that remote and inaccessible thing, which many do regard it, it may, through the influence of the word which is nigh unto you, and of the spirit that is given to prayer, be lighted up in the inner man of an individual upon earth, whose person may even here, exemplify its graces, and whose soul may even here realize a measure of its enjoyments.

“ And hence one great purpose of the incarnation of our Saviour. He came down amongst us in the full perfection of heaven’s character, and has made us see, that it is a character which may be embodied. All its virtues were, in his case, infused into a corporeal framework, and the substance of these lower regions was taken into intimate and abiding association with the spirit of the higher. The ingredient which is heavenly, admits of being united with the ingredient which is earthly. So that we, who, by nature, are of the earth, and earthly, could we catch of that pure and celestial element which made the man Christ Jesus to differ from all other men, then might we too be formed into that character, by which it is that the members of the family above, differ from those of the outcast family beneath. Now, it is expressly said of him, that he is set before us as an example, and we are required to look to that living exhibition of him, where all the graces of the upper sanctuary are beheld as in a picture ; and instead of an abstract, we have in his history a familiar representation of such worth, and piety, and excellence, as could they only be stamped upon our own persons, and borne along with us to the place where he now dwelleth —instead of being shunned as aliens, we should be welcomed and recognised as seemly companions for the

inmates of that place of holiness. And, in truth, the great work of Christ's disciples upon earth, is a constant and busy process of assimilation to their Master who is in heaven. And we live under a special economy, that has been set up for the express purpose of helping it forward. It is for this, in particular, that the Spirit is provided. We are changed into the image of the Lord, even by the Spirit of the Lord. Nursed out of this fulness, we grow up unto the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus; and, instead of heaven being a remote and mysterious unknown, heaven is brought near to us by the simple expedient of inspiring us where we now stand, with its love, and its purity, and its sacredness.

" We learn from Christ, that the heavenly graces are all of them compatible with the wear of an earthly body. And the circumstances of an earthly habitation. It is not said in how many of its features the new earth will differ from, or be like unto the present one; but we, by turning from our iniquities unto Christ, push forward the resemblance of the one to the other, in the only feature that is specified, even that ' therein dwelleth righteousness.'

" And had we only the character of heaven, we should not be long of feeling what that is which essentially makes the comfort of heaven. ' Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity; therefore, God thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness, above thy fellows.' Let us but love the righteousness which he loves, and hate the iniquity which he hateth, and this, of itself, would so soften and attune the mechanism of our moral nature, that in all the movements of it, there should be joy. It is not sufficiently adverted to, that

the happiness of heaven lies simply and essentially in the well-going machinery of a well-conditioned soul; and that, according to its measure, it is the same in kind with the happiness of God, who liveth for ever in bliss ineffable, because he is unchangeable in being good, and upright and holy. There may be audible music in heaven, but its chief delight will be in the music of well-poised affections, and of principles in full and consenting harmony with the laws of eternal rectitude. There may be visions of loveliness there, but it will be the loveliness of virtue, as seen directly in God, and as reflected back again in family likeness from all his children ; it will be this that shall give its purest and sweetest transports to the soul. In a word, the main reward of Paradise, is spiritual joy, and that springing at once from the love and the possession of spiritual excellence. It is such a joy as sin extinguishes, on the moment of its entering the soul ; and such a joy as is again restored to the soul, and that immediately on its being restored to righteousness.

" It is thus that heaven may be established upon earth, and the petition of our Lord's prayer be fulfilled, ' Thy kingdom come ; ' this petition receives its best explanation from the one which follows : ' Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.' It just requires a similarity of habit and character in the two places, to make out a similarity of enjoyment. Let us attend, then, to the way in which the services of the upper sanctuary are rendered ; not in the spirit of legality, for this gendereth to bondage ; but in the spirit of love, which gendereth to the beatitude of the affections rejoicing in their best and most favourite indulgence. They do not work there for the purpose of making out

the conditions of a bargain. They do not act agreeably to the pleasure of God, in order to obtain the gratification of any distinct will or distinct pleasure of their own, in return for it. Their will is, in fact, identical with the will of God. There is a perfect unison of taste and of inclination between the creature and the Creator. They are in their element, when they are feeling righteously and doing righteously. Obedience is not drudgery, but delight to them ; and as much as there is of the congenial between animal nature, and the food that is suitable to it, so much is there of the congenial between the moral nature of heaven and its sacred employments and services. Let the will of God, then, be done here, as it is done there, and not only will character and conduct be the same here as there, but they will also resemble each other in the style, though not in the degree of their blessedness. The happiness of heaven will be exemplified upon earth, along with the virtue of heaven : for, in truth, the main ingredient of that happiness is not given them in payment for work, but it lies in the love they bear to the work itself. A man is never happier than when employed in that which he likes best. This is all a question of taste ; but should such a taste be given as to make it a man's meat and drink to do the will of his Father, then is he in perfect readiness for being carried upwards to heaven, and placed beside the pure river of water of life, that proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. This is the way in which you may make a heaven upon earth, not by heaping your reluctant offers at the shrine of legality, but by serving God because you love him, and doing his will, because you delight to do him honour.

"And here we may remark, that the only possible conveyance for this new principle into the heart, is the gospel of Jesus Christ—that in no other way than through the acceptance of its free pardon, sealed by the blood of an atonement, which exalts the law-giver, can the soul of man be both emancipated from the fear of terror, and solemnized into the fear of humble and holy reverence—that it is only in conjunction with the faith which justifies, that the love of gratitude, and the love of moral esteem, are made to arise in the bosom of regenerated man; and, therefore, to bring down the virtues of heaven, as well as the peace of heaven, into this lower world, we know not what else can be done, than to urge upon you the great propitiation of the New Testament; nor are we aware of any expedient by which all the cold and freezing sensations of legality can be done away, but by your thankful and unconditional acceptance of Jesus Christ, and him crucified."—*St. John's Church Sermons.* p. 191.

*Extract from a Letter from the Rev. J. Fletcher
of Madeley, in reference to some Prophetic
Communications made to him by a friend.*

"GIVE me leave to conclude with some reflections that naturally flow from what has been said on that system.

"I. Many people, I know, look on the meditations of prophecies, so expressly enjoined by St. Peter, as one of the greatest instances of presumption and enthusiasm;

because they believe there is no sure ground to build upon, and that it is a land of darkness, in which the most enlightened Christians will never fail to stumble and fall shamefully. But is it probable that God, who foretold to a year, and very clearly, the deliverance of the Israelites from their Egyptian bondage, the return of the Jews from the captivity in Babylon, and the building of the second temple, and the birth and death of the Messiah; is it probable, I say, that he should have been silent, or not have spoken as clearly concerning his coming to destroy the destroyers, and to set up that kingdom which we pray for, when we daily say, according to our Lord's appointment, 'Thy kingdom come?'

" If God has exactly foretold, for the comfort of believers, the various revolutions that have happened to his church in ages past, is it possible that he should have left himself without a witness concerning the most important of all, I mean the last? If he showed the prophets the first act of his drama, is it not highly probable he has not forgot the last, without which his wisdom, justice, and mercy would always remain hid under a thick cloud ?

" II. Let none say that Jesus himself, as a man, knew not the end of the world: and that Moses says, ' hidden things are for the Lord, but revealed ones for us and for our children.' I acknowledge that the end of the world, and the time of the purification of this globe by dissolution and fire, is a secret too deeply hid in the glass of God's decrees for any man to fathom, before God himself is pleased to reveal it. But nobody talks here of the end of the world: nobody fixes either the hour, or the day, nor even the year of Christ's se-

cond appearing. Since he did not think fit to reveal it to us, we ought to stand in continual readiness for it : for, supposing this system to be true in all points, supposing the tribulation is to begin next year, it will still be impossible to determine whether Jesus will come down in ten or fifty years ; so that our Lord's words are true in all their extent, even now ; for that day and hour, and even that year, *knoweth no man*. Yet we expect to see the full cleansing of his sanctuary by the fire of persecution ; the destroying of antichrist and unbelief, his great enemies ; the subduing of all nations to his easy yoke ; the calling of the Jews ; the fulfilling of God's gracious promises to that long scattered seed of Abraham ; and the beginning of those times, when the fear of the Lord shall cover the face of the earth, as the waters do that of the sea. Where is the child of God that dares to say, that all these things must not come to pass before the end of the world ? and if so, when should they happen, but in the time he has been pleased to fix in his holy bible ? Where is the man that makes God a liar, because he is an unbeliever ? Shall the Lord say, and shall he not do ? Shall he promise, and shall he not perform ? If he has borne with the wickedness of the world so long, not being willing that any man should perish, shall he delay, to all eternity, to fulfil his threatenings ? God forbid ; the day is fixed, it is foretold ; and though the vision was to be after many days, as the angel said to Daniel, yet it may be fulfilled in a few days for us who live in the last times.

“ III. It is lawful, yea, needful, that we and our children should often think of these things ; for ‘ hidden things are for the Lord, but these are revealed for us and our children ;’ they are revealed in all the prophets, from

Moses to John, and more especially in the revelations of this beloved apostle: Let but those objectors ponder the word *Αποκαλυψεις*, and they will be ashamed to say, that we must not look into those things because they were never revealed unto us.

“ IV. If Jesus told his disciples, that it was not theirs to know the times when those things should be accomplished, it does not follow that it must be hid from us, who are far nearer concerned in them than they were: besides, how should they have understood and bore those things, before they had received the Comforter, since they thought them bitter, after they had obtained the divine gift, when they had some knowledge of them? Add to this, that Daniel’s vision was to be ‘closed to the end,’ and could not be perfectly known till very near the time of the fulfilling of it.

“ V. It is remarkable, that more books have been written upon the prophecies these last hundred years, than were ever known before, and all (those at least which I have read) agree that these things will, in all probability, soon come upon the earth. I know many have been grossly mistaken as to the years; but because they were rash, shall we be stupid? because they said ‘*to-day*,’ shall we say ‘*never?*’ and cry ‘Peace, peace,’ when we should look about us with eyes full of expectation?

“ Let us not judge rashly, nor utter vain predictions in the name of the Lord; but yet let us look about us with watchful eyes, lest the enemy take an advantage of us, and we lose the opportunity of rousing people out of their sleep; of confirming the weak, and building up in our most holy faith, those who know him in whom they have believed. If we are mistaken in forming

conjectures ; if the phenomena we hear of every where are but common providences ; if these things happen not to us, but to our children, (as they most certainly will before the third generation is swept away,) is it not our business to prepare ourselves for them, to meditate on them, and to warn as many people as we can prudently, lest their blood should be required at our hands, were they to fall because of a surprise ? Let us pray to God more frequently, that for the elect's sake he would still more shorten the days of the tribulation, and add daily to the true church such as will be saved. But let us not forget to *rejoice* with Abraham, in seeing by faith the glorious day of our Lord ; and to hasten, by our fervent prayers, that glorious kingdom, those happy days, when narrow shall be the way to destruction, when *saints raised from the dead* shall converse with *living saints*, and the world of spirits be manifested in a great measure to the *material world* ; in a word, when Jesus shall be all in all.

“ What a glorious prospect is this ! Let us then often think of these words of our Lord, ‘ Behold, I come quickly ! blessed is he that mindeth the sayings of this prophecy.’ Let us join ‘ the Spirit and the Bride,’ who say, ‘ Come.’ ‘ O let him that heareth say, Come ; and let him that is athirst come ; for he that testifieth these things says, Surely I come quickly : Amen : even so, come, Lord Jesus ! ’ ” *

* Vide Fletcher's Posthumous Letters, p. 385.

THE END.

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